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THE

LIFE

OF

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

25609

BY HIS SONS,

ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M. A.

VICAR OF EAST FARLEIGH, LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.

AND

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M. A.

RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

Happy is the state
In which ye, father, here do dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate
From all the tempests of these worldly seas.

SPENCER.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, BUNGAY.

ERRATA.

VOL. IV.

PAGE	LINE	
212,	15,	*for* traité *read* traite
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THE

LIFE OF WILBERFORCE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JANUARY 1812 TO JULY 1812.

New-year's day—Charitable Donation Bill—Trinidad Registration—Mr. Stephen—American War—Christianity in India—Endeavours to keep back Dissenters—Bishop of Durham—Perceval—Ministry—Orders in Council—Sessional business—Religious Societies—Archdeacon Pott—Mr. Perceval's assassination—Formation of a ministry—Mr. Sheridan—Orders in Council withdrawn—Distress of the country—Mr. Canning—Wilberforce's domestic character.

THE new year opened with his usual song of praise. "Oh what mercies have I to acknowledge during the past year! Surely it is a solemn season, but I go to prayer; only let me put down my gratitude and humiliation. I must especially try to husband time more. O Lord, enable me to redeem it! I must try to keep an account of time and work, to take security against trifling."[1] "I have been detained long at church," he tells Dr. Coulthurst, "according to a

[1] Diary and Journal, Jan. 1, 1812.

custom which I have observed for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, of devoting the new year to God by public worship in a sacrament on the 1st of January—but you shall hear from me to-morrow; and at this season, when it is usual for friends to interchange good wishes, accept the assurance of my best remembrances and kindest wishes for yourself and all that are dear to you for time and for eternity." A few days later he resumes his pen—"I have not been negligent though I have been silent concerning Mr. Rose's Bill. I have written to him once or twice for his proposed modifications. I shall receive them I dare say in a day or two, and will transmit them for your consideration, and that of our common friends the clergy in and about Halifax.

"Mr. Lockhart is M. P. for Oxford, and his bill is much the same as that which I brought in two years ago, to render all donations public, in the hope of preventing thereby their being alienated or abused. You have no reason for apprehension in that quarter." "With regard to the Charitable Donation Bill," he tells Mr. Roberts shortly afterwards, "I should have a long story to tell, if I were to put you in possession of the past and present proceedings. I brought in the Bill two successive years, but was foiled by the lawyers. Mr. Lockhart tried it last year, but with no better success. This year he has put the draught into the hands of Sir Samuel Romilly, desiring him to modify and correct it. I will give your suggestions to Mr. Lockhart, desiring him to communicate them to Sir Samuel."

West Indian matters occupied his first attention. On the 6th of January he held a consultation with "Stephen, Sir Samuel Romilly, and Brougham," and "settled to proceed with Registry Bill this year."[2] On this essential safeguard of the Abolition Bill he had long been intent; and after many private interviews, Mr. Perceval had consented to establish immediately a registration at Trinidad. This was a promising beginning; but just when it was to be gazetted, a "difficulty was suggested by the Attorney and Solicitor-General, who wished that some colonial persons should be consulted before the plan was adopted; forgetting that the whole was considered as already settled."[3] This fatal step was happily prevented. "The Trinidad Registration has been in great danger of striking on a rock when we thought ourselves in port, by being referred to Marryatt; the design defeated by urgent remonstrances of Stephen and myself to Perceval and Lord Liverpool."[4] But a change of ministry, of which there were many rumours current, might still have mocked their hopes, and until the measure was in actual operation he could not cease "to press it upon Perceval," who at length wrote him word—

"Downing Street.

"Dear Wilberforce,

I will endeavour to put the Privy Council in immediate action upon the Trinidad Registration. I

[2] Diary, Jan. 6. [3] Ib. Jan. 11.
[4] Ib. Jan. 18.

am sorry you continue still apprehensive of an increase of your hoarseness.

I am, dear Wilberforce, ever yours,

SP. PERCEVAL."

Though his continued indisposition kept him still away from public business . . "I wished heartily that I had been in the House *with my voice* the other night, when I read next morning the account of Creevey's speech,"[66] . . he spared no exertions compatible with chamber practice. "I thought it right to go to attend Privy Purse Committee—Perceval, Ryder, Canning, Adams. No real business; but to settle about the King's charity engagements."[5] He writes at night to Mr. Stephen,

"Jan. 18, 1812.

"My dear Stephen,

I went this morning to the secret committee, conceiving it would be no more than sitting by a good fire in a private room; but having been detained, I have not been able to look through my papers. * * * I wrote to Lord Liverpool as well as to Perceval about Trinidad. I hope you will be able to keep your two Sir Williams[6] from any dangerous alteration, and I trust they will at least be fair critics.

"I must break off, my dear fellow; it is late, and I must say good night, otherwise I should be tempted

[5] Diary, Jan. 18.

[6] Probably Sir William Scott and Sir William Grant.

to scribble on and pour forth out of the fulness of my heart. "In what a bustle do we live! You however are attending to the great objects. I am grieved to think how little ones often swallow up my days. Oh said Grotius, vitam perdidi strenue nihil agendo. Well, let us try to amend where we are wrong; and for our comfort under a sense of unworthiness, while however we are striving to mend, we serve a kind and merciful Master. But good night once more. I am ever affectionately, and never so affectionately as when my mind is in its best state,

Yours most sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Other subjects were crowding on to increase this bustle. The approaching crisis with America filled him with uneasiness. "There seems real reason to fear a war with America, yet honest Butterworth's correspondents say that we need not heed the war cry, as being only meant to intimidate. It may be so; but nine times out of ten it is a game at brag, wherein each party depends upon the giving way of the other, or would not himself push on so warmly. Alas, alas![7] Feb. 3rd. Bankes thinks with me that there is no chance of the Prince's changing the ministry, or consequently of a speedy dissolution, but we both fear an American war. I am wanting my voice much, that I may plead the cause of Christianity in India, and soften the asperity of hostile tempers between Great

[7] Diary, Jan. 29.

Britain and America." "I am so much affected," he tells Mr. Babington, "by the probability of a war with America, that I am strongly disposed to go to the House if Whitbread brings on his motion,[8] that I may declare the grief and pain with which the very thought of a war with America fills my heart. I have often thought that we have not enough borne in mind that the people of America have a great influence over their government, and that their thinking that a great number of people in this country feel for them might tend to allay irritation, even if a war should break out."[9] Mr. Whitbread's motion came on upon the 12th of February, and after "thinking a little about American question in the morning—he went down to the House for the first time this session. People kindly welcomed me—I spoke for about twenty minutes without suffering in voice, and very well heard. Whitbread angry at me for voting and speaking against him, and very rough and rude. He seemed himself to think so, for he came up next day and talked with me some time, saying how much he had been disappointed by my going against him. Yet all our set voted with me—much misrepresented in the Morning Chronicle next day. I went against my wife's remonstrance, to soften and prevent irritation."[10]

To his friends in the country he thus explains the motives of his conduct.

[8] For the correspondence between the two governments.

[9] Feb. 4.

[10] Diary.

TO S. ROBERTS ESQ.

"Near London, Feb. 15, 1812.

" My dear Sir,

My complaint has been much more serious, and has hung on me far longer, than I expected. I thank God, I am convalescent I hope, though not well. But on Thursday last, the great anxiety I felt, and indeed continue to feel, on the American question, carried me to the House of Commons much sooner than perhaps was prudent; and really I have been as usual so misrepresented and traduced in the newspaper reports of the debates, that I almost regret my not having staid away. It is a satisfaction to me however to reflect, that I went for the purpose of soothing any irritation which might arise, and of preventing any mischievous discussions. I have not time to be at all particular, but I can assure you, had Whitbread's motion been complied with, and the various particulars mentioned in the correspondence between the British and American ministers come into discussion, the most acrimonious debates and the strongest charges (and I must say, well-founded charges in some instances) against the American government, and its representative, General Armstrong, must have come forward.

" Again, I fear there is too much cause for apprehending, that the American government, finding its threatening language produce the effect of making our parliament take the negociation into its own hands, would conceive that it need only go on threatening

with increased warmth, to insure our conceding all it should require; whereas, I know it would thereby call forth a spirit of a directly opposite kind in many of our country gentlemen, as well as in government, and would consequently produce the rupture which I so greatly deprecate. But I must say farewell; and believe me, with esteem and regard, my dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Samuel Roberts Esq."

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"Near London, Feb. 17, 1812.

"My dear Muncaster,

Your inference was but too well founded. It was by medical prohibition that I was kept from the House; and it was in defiance of conjugal entreaties that I made my appearance there on Thursday last. In truth, I was afraid of some acrimonious disputation, and I went to the House for the purpose of dropping a few healing and balsamic expressions which might tend to prevent the rankling of that wound, which however fatal to America if it were actually to break forth into a war, would be in a thousand ways pernicious to this country. Neither will you wonder when I declare, that I cannot look forward to the idea of victory in any war between Great Britain and America, as in a contest with our ancient enemies. You will not however be surprised, that I thought it safer not to vote with Whitbread the other

night; for if the American government, after their threatening language, had found us for the first time giving way, it would probably infer that it had only to bully us in still coarser terms to dispose us to still further concessions. Thus it commonly happens that nations get involved in war; each of them hoping by putting on a bold face, and using terrific language, to deter the other, and intimidate him into acquiescence.

"When, my dear Muncaster, will you again come among us? I see that you have had enough of London; and I cannot wonder that you come to it most reluctantly when I compare your Jermyn Street, or any street quarters, with the varied comforts and interests of your venerable castle. "You would be amused just now if you were here to witness the expedients with which certain classes of politicians are laying in to meet whatever face of parties they find presented to their view. But the whole mystery must be cleared up in two or three days, if it be not already so. I dare say you know more at 300 miles from London, than I do at one. Farewell.

My dear Muncaster, ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The other great cause which he "wanted voice to plead," and which eighteen years before he had pressed so earnestly on parliament, was brought on at this time by the approaching expiration of the East India Company's charter.[11] Liverpool and Greenock had

[11] Its charter was to expire in May, 1814.

already petitioned parliament against its renewal; and from the coming contest Mr. Wilberforce hoped "to obtain some spiritual advantages for Hindostan."[12] "We have now approaching," he tells Mr. Roberts, "three or four of the most important subjects which ever engaged the attention of parliament. Above all, the East India Company's charter, on which I am busily engaged in reading, thinking, consulting, and persuading." Upon the 14th he "wrote to Gisborne about East India religious instruction, urging his writing a short pamphlet, and making if possible a stir amongst the clergy." He was most anxious that the Church should assume her proper station in this noble undertaking, and was therefore "trying to keep back the Dissenters and Methodists, until the Church fairly come forward, from fear that if the sectaries begin the Church will not follow. I wish them therefore to delay applying to the legislature, for instructing the East Indians, or for the repeal of the Conventicle Act, which they are about to attempt in consequence of the judgment of the King's Bench that a man must be a teacher of a separate congregation."[13] This view he endeavoured to impress on Mr. Butterworth.

"Feb. 15, 1812.

"My dear Sir,

I have long been looking forward to the period of the renewal of the East India Company's charter, as to a great era when I hoped that it would please

[12] Diary. [13] Ib. Feb. 14.

God to enable the friends of Christianity to be the instruments of wiping away what I have long thought, next to the Slave Trade, the foulest blot on the moral character of our country—the suffering our fellow-subjects (nay, they even stand towards us in the closer relation of our tenants) in the East Indies, to remain, without any effort on our part to enlighten and reform them, under the grossest, the darkest, and most depraving system of idolatrous superstition that almost ever existed upon earth.

" To your observing eye I need not point out many events which may well encourage a humble hope that better days are approaching for India. But at the same time I am but too well aware, that if the unbiassed judgment of the House of Commons were to decide the question, fatal indeed would be the issue. I am not without hopes of Mr. Perceval's lending himself to any moderate plan; but it will be necessary, I am persuaded, to call into action the whole force of the religious world. But on this subject, knowing with whom I have to do, I shall express myself without reserve, trusting to your candour for a fair construction of my sentiments. I am not without hopes of prevailing on a considerable party in the Church of England to interest themselves on the occasion: but I own I fear that if the Dissenters and Methodists come into action before our force from the Establishment has stirred, a great part of the latter will either desert our ranks, or be cold and reluctant followers. Now, if I mistake not, the organization of the Dissenters, and still more of the Methodist body, is so

complete, that any impulse may be speedily conveyed throughout the whole frame. It appears therefore, that it would be expedient for the Dissenters and Methodist bodies not to show themselves till the members of the Church have actually committed themselves, (according to our parliamentary phrase,) or till it be seen that they cannot be prevailed on to come forward.

"I was more grieved than surprised to hear from Mr. Stephen yesterday that there was an intention of applying to the legislature shortly for a repeal of the Conventicle Act. Such a discussion would infallibly produce a violent contest between all the high Churchmen and the Methodists and all classes of Dissenters; and when once the two parties should be arrayed against each other, I fear they would continue to oppose each other on the East Indian Instruction subject, as well as on the other. What great harm could there be in pausing for one year?

"I am, my dear sir, with cordial regard,

Yours always sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He was himself endeavouring to arouse the Church; "setting hard to work on a paper for the Christian Observer urging clergymen to come forward and press the communication of Christian light to the natives of India;" and using freely in all directions his own personal influence. "Feb. 15th. Called on Bishop of Durham about East India Company's renewal affair—he professing to feel much, and I hope

truly, for a good man, (a bishop 43 years,) but said fairly that from the bishops nothing could come well but from an Archbishop of Canterbury, and though the present at school at least when he a bishop, yet he might be jealous of an old man. He talked much about national schools—liberal and prudent—strongly opposed the rule of using no books but what in Bartlett's Buildings' catalogue. Lord Grenville, the Speaker, and others opposed the rule, but carried by one. Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury supported it. Bishop of Durham moved 'or were approved by the bishop of the diocese,' yet even this negatived—only saying to him, that any books he used (for he said he did give his schools some not in the catalogue) should be added to their stock."[14]

On the same errand too he called on Mr. Perceval. "Went to see him entirely about the East India charter occasion, for securing the means of introducing Christian light into India. He freely professed himself favourable to the object, but saw great difficulties in the way, and asked for some distinct proposition. I had told Grant he would. I replied by saying that at least parliament might in the Act insert some such general declarations of principles, as in the two resolutions I moved in May, 1793, and carried in the Committee and House, but which Lord Melville would not put into the Bill. But more—that we must secure the entrance of missionaries. To whom can any discretionary power of granting or refusing

[14] Diary.

leave to go be trusted? I must think over this most important point, but I have long conceived that probably those who are interested for religion will be compelled to join the great body of commercial and political-economy men, who will I doubt not contend for destroying the monopoly of the Company, and leaving the road to the East Indies free and open;"[15] "and I cannot doubt that the most mature consideration will only confirm the present inclination of my mind, to throw open the whole, and even abolish the East India Company altogether, rather than not insure a passage for the entrance of light, and truth, and moral improvement and happiness into that benighted and degraded region."[16]

"I am sadly disappointed," he says a week later,[17] "in finding even religious people so cold about the East Indian Instruction. Partly produced I think by the sectaries having had a notion that the Church of England to be established. Alas! alas! let us have some substance before we differ about form." "I begin to despair of much being gained for the Christian cause in the East Indian charter discussion."[18] Yet he did not intermit his efforts. All through the session he was on the watch to seize every opportunity of diffusing right views on this important subject, and was thus preparing the way for the triumph of the following year. "March 7th. Writing to the Bishop of St. David's about East India Christianizing. Dined at Speaker's—sat next to George Holford and

[15] Diary, Feb. 14.
[16] Letter to J. Butterworth Esq. M. P.
[17] Diary, Feb. 21.
[18] Ib. Feb. 26.

Leicester. Talked to former about East Indian mission, and Buchanan. Cunninghame of Lainshaw breakfasted with me, to talk about getting the General Assembly of Scotland to take up the cause of Christianizing India.[19] Dined at Lord Carrington's —Lord and Lady Camden, Lord Glastonbury, and Lansdown, &c. I told them Sabat's story, which they scarce believed, or about infanticide.[20] Sir J. Barlow opposing diffusion of Scriptures in Hindostan. A most alarming private account of Scindia writing to the secretary of government, resenting our measures for proselyting India. Surely this is the evil spirit's stirring up. It is not yet known. We are all at work about the best mode of providing for the free course of religious instruction in India, and this intelligence made known would ruin us.[21] To town, calling at Bartlett's Buildings to inquire what done about East India Company's charter. Conference at Butterworth's till near five. Settled that the different sects should apply separately to Perceval, and to the chief members in the House of Commons, stating their deep interest—and also inform the minds of their people every where throughout the country."[22]

"I am extremely sorry," wrote Archdeacon Pott a few days afterwards,[23] "that you had a journey to Bartlett's Buildings to no purpose. I took the first opportunity which occurred of calling the attention of the Committee to the spiritual wants of India, and the Committee concurred with me in bringing the

[19] Diary, March 11. [20] April 25. [21] April 12.
[22] April 15. [23] To William Wilberforce Esq.

matter before the Board. The application to parliament had been in my mind, and the Committee had concurred in that design, but the Bishop of London reminded us that we were no corporate body, and thought it would be best to apply first to the East India Company."

"To town to meet Grant, and with him to Lord Melville, about getting leave for gospel light to pass into India. This is indeed a cause for which it is worth while being a public man. Kept waiting long, and wrote to stir up Wrangham, and through him Lord Milton."[24]

Public affairs meanwhile were of a highly interesting character. "The 18th of February was the day on which the Prince came into possession of his power, and his decision to retain Perceval was what many have anticipated. Yet it is to be regretted that Perceval should so cross the public feeling about economy and reform—by throwing out Bankes's Reversionary Bill, and giving away M'Mahon's place, one shilling in the pound on widows' pensions."[25] "25th. Castlereagh sat yesterday upon the Treasury Bench for a time, evidently to show he was in. I named it to Perceval afterwards, and said what a good man of business he was. Perceval was quite silent. 27th. House till half-past three on Sir T. Turton's motion on the state of the nation, which, though going off without the great ones coming to combat, at length brought to light its real meaning—who to be minister; and Canning first time divided with opposition, 136 to 209. 29th, Mr.

[24] Diary, March 19. [25] Ib. Feb. 20.

Alexander Baring came at one by appointment to talk of Orders in Council and licences till four. The scales doubtful; but if an American war certain provided the Orders are retained, *that* makes them preponderate." "I never was a warm friend to those measures; or rather no friend at all, but an enemy to parts of them. I am sick at heart from the sad prospect of a war with America." [26] Upon the 3rd of March this question came before the House. "Brougham's motion on Orders in Council and licences till half-past four—I spoke, and treated rather unkindly I thought, but a momentary thing, or rather a ministerial temptation. Canning for the first time showed plain opposition front—Stephen spoke well; and still better, like an honest man. He is one of the most upright of men." [27]

The defeat of Mr. Brougham's motion set this question at rest for the present, but the commercial distresses of the country led soon afterwards to a general clamour against the Orders; and on the 28th of April Mr. "Perceval agreed to a committee on the petitions of distressed places. He mentioned to Stephen my opinion as a motive. Taunted by Whitbread —how uncandid! and true party spirit." [28] He was now leading his usual London life; constant in the House, full of all plans for public or private charity, and showing to others no symptom of the decay which he suspected in himself. One "day at home writing and correcting a paper about Danish confiscation;" then "to Rose at the Council Office with Latrobe

[26] Letter to Mr. Roberts. [27] Diary. [28] Ib.

about the Moravian missionaries in Greenland,"[29] or "all the afternoon busy about setting up a dispensary for our neighbourhood,"[30] and "waiting on the Duke of York to ask him to be patron of it. He very obliging and civil, and consented"—an amiable trait in his Royal Highness towards a conscientious opponent,[31] which he always loved to mention. In the House he spoke more than once upon the system of punishments in the army, "enforcing my argument that no flogging but by general court-martial. Also the hardship of not letting people quit the army; also Pitt's system of rewards; honouring Sir F. Burdett for his feelings, yet durst not abolish it altogether, (navy for example,) where perhaps indispensable to ship's safety to have some prompt mode of enforcing discipline and obedience; also danger of teaching soldiers to look to House of Commons for remedying individual cases of grievance—their getting even patrons in our House. Most vilely used[32] in the newspapers."[33]

On the first motion against the place of Colonel M'Mahon, he "spoke, and we beat the ministers by three."[34] He objected only to the mode of payment,[34] and on the 14th of April, deeming the attack "a most clear party motion," he maintained the fitness of the office, only urging, which Mr. Perceval conceded, that

[29] Diary, March 26. [30] Ib. March 20.

[31] Vid. vol. 3. p. 106.

[32] The newspapers reported him to have maintained, (and the Parliamentary Debates preserve the error,) that it was now easy for a private to obtain his discharge. His speech was aimed especially against the difficulty which he had just found insuperable, in the case of a poor client, who had enlisted during a period of occasional insanity.

[33] Diary, March 26. [34] By a per-centage upon widows' pensions.

its salary should come from the Regent's privy purse. The cry of "secret influence" had been raised, and in reply he told the House, "that loudly as Lord North had charged it upon the early years of George the Third, he had the strong assurance of the noble Lord himself, in later life, that the suspicion had been altogether groundless." "May 8th. House till about two on Parliamentary Reform. I should have spoken but for Ryder's telling me he would have followed, saying, How shocking to throw such an apple amongst the factious in Yorkshire! I thought I had better be silent. I for Parliamentary Reform moderately. Elliot, (Castle Spectre,) and Ward, Lord Dudley's son, spoke very ably against Reform, pushing strongly against all Reform, and arguing for extremes. Sir Francis Burdett moderate and able." West Indian questions too were constantly arising. "To a meeting of the African Institution, previous to talking with different ministers about stopping Portuguese Slave Trade—Bissao. To Lord Castlereagh on getting Bissao from the Portuguese. To Lord Liverpool and Yorke, getting more naval force on the African coast." The Registration Bill, with which it had been settled to proceed, required much consideration. "To Lord Grey with William Smith, by appointment, about Registry Bill for West Indian slaves. He not decided, on grounds of interfering with the colonial legislature. Saw Lord Grenville about register of slaves in the West Indies. He received me kindly."

On the 6th of April he had a consultation at the rooms of Mr. Perceval with him and Lord Liverpool, which he afterwards reports to Mr. Stephen.

"Monday afternoon.

"My dear Stephen,

Perceval was very fair to-day, and declared that if we should bring the business forward he would support it as well as he could, but that he thought it would be more prudent to wait till another year in order to see how the engine should work in Trinidad, and rectify any errors, supply any defects, &c. which experience should suggest. Again, should it fail in the House of Commons, our measure in Trinidad would start under great disadvantages.

"We should have a meeting and settle our opinion one way or the other when you can come to us.

"My sister waits for this, so I must not be slow or full.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"James Stephen Esq."

"I told Perceval frankly," says his Diary, "that my strongest reason for immediate action was, that if a dissolution should take place this year and we should lose Stephen, the loss would be irremediable." The hearty, unsuspecting confidence with which the Abolition leaders fought their common battle was one great secret of their strength. "Should we lose you," writes Mr. Stephen to Mr. Wilberforce, "before the present difficulties of our cause are vanquished, neither my efforts nor the credit that may be attached to my information are likely to be of any importance. I should perhaps turn my mind and pen to less impracticable objects."

"Your letter," Mr. Wilberforce replies at one time to the announcement of a step gained by Mr. Macaulay, "calls forth contradictory emotions. On the one hand, I feel averse to coming out of my lurking-hole; yet on the other hand, I long to be among you. I seem to be leaving it to others, and especially to yourself, to labour through the heat and toils of the day; you really however are rather to be envied than pitied, considering the happy issue of your late exertions. I recall my word; I might perhaps have envied some persons, but you and Stephen I can never envy, be your successes what they may in the African fields, considering how well earned your laurels will be, let them be ever so umbrageous. Believe me to be,

Ever yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Another cause to which he freely gave his time and thoughts, was the welfare of the different religious societies. Most of them he had seen arise around him since his entrance into public life; for they owed their origin to the increased attention to religion, which was in great measure the fruit of his exertions. When he was most occupied this spring, he still found time to attend the "general meeting of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East." A grand assemblage—I spoke with acceptance. It went off well."[35] "To Perceval's, talking with him about the business of Africa and the East, also the

[35] Diary, April 24.

East Indies—he very pleasing." "May 5th. Bartlett's Buildings by special summons on East India Christianizing—very full meeting—Archbishop presiding. John Gifford (Anti-Jacobin) properly spirited. Appointed committee to prepare a report and resolutions for Perceval and Lord Buckinghamshire, meaning in Church of England way. African and Asiatic Society's dinner—took the chair. Then House, where sat late. May 6th. British and Foreign Bible Society, annual meeting—all went off admirably. Immense meeting—I spoke with acceptance—several bishops present."

The meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge led to some important consequences. To the committee then appointed, Mr. Wilberforce transmitted Dr. Buchanan's sketch for an ecclesiastical establishment in India, which they embodied in their resolutions; and thus the first great steps were taken which led to the appointment of our Indian bishoprics. Of the progress of this business he heard afterwards from Archdeacon Pott.

"Dear Sir,

I take the liberty of sending you a sort of child that may claim to be laid at your door, for certainly it owes its birth to you, though it would be hard to make you responsible for its manifold defects.

* * * * * * * * *

"I reduced to an abstract the chief points of the documents you sent me. That abridged statement was read to the last East Indian Committee, and a

vote of thanks passed to you. I have enclosed the resolutions. Another Committee meeting is called for the purpose of considering them further, and in order to give the archbishop and bishops time to read them, and attend the next Committee. I fear they will not satisfy my friend Gifford's ardent spirit, who is for giving no quarter to the East India Company; he will think the resolutions very tame; but perhaps the next meeting may infuse a little more life into them.

"I hope you will excuse the trouble thus given to you; and I am, my dear sir, with sincere acknowledgments,

Your much obliged and very faithful servant,

J. H. POTT."

In the midst of these peaceful occupations he was startled by a shock which was felt throughout the kingdom. On Monday, May 11th, some friends had been breakfasting with him to talk over the East Indian question, and then "considering the question of sinecures preparatory to the third reading of Bankes's Bill for their abolition. Late in town Stopped to dine at Babington's at half-past four. Babington (who was chairman of the Committee on the Orders in Council) at the examination, which began at four, when he returned to us (Henry Thornton, Mrs. Babington, &c.) about a quarter to five, greatly agitated, stating that Perceval had been shot dead in the lobby. We could scarce believe it. I went, after calling at Perceval's and Arbuthnot's, who

quite overwhelmed, to the House, to the Prison rooms, where the poor wretch Bellingham [was, they were] examining him. I carefully perused his face for some time, close to him—a striking face: at times he shed tears, or had shed them; but strikingly composed and mild, though haggard. Called William Smith's, who close to Perceval when he dropped, and who thought it was myself, till he looked in the face. Smith, with another, carried him into the Secretary's room. Poor Lord Arden quite wild with grief—'No, I know he is not here, he is gone to a better world." The next day he went "early to town to the Speaker's, by whom summoned about the proposition to be made for the provision for poor Perceval's family."

"Palace Yard, Tuesday, May 12, 1812.

"My dear Sir,

Pray be here to-day at three precisely to meet some parliamentary persons of all descriptions, whom I have requested to consider of recommending (in consequence of yesterday's sad and atrocious event) Mr. Perceval's family to the gracious protection of the Crown. If it is proper to do such a thing, it is best to have it previously concerted, that the manner, as well as the measure, may be right.

Believe me ever
Most truly and faithfully yours,

CHARLES ABBOT.

"William Wilberforce Esq."

"The Speaker stated that he feared he might be

blamed for not having asked more persons—Castlereagh and Ryder, Ponsonby and Whitbread, Bathurst and Vansittart, Bankes and myself, Sir William Grant and Scott; and he added that any one who wished might bring more. Lord Castlereagh stated that the Prince had ordered a message, desiring the House to enable him, &c. and that government had thought of £50,000 for the children, and £2,000 per annum for Mrs. Perceval for life—all agreed. House—all went off quite well." On the 13th the question came before the House; and he was most anxious that no opposition to it should tarnish the grace and honour of the grant. "I strongly urged the importance of unanimity; for Burdett having laid in a claim to oppose, (though he expressed his horror of assassination,) I feared a debate, and urged any one who could not agree, to retire if he could do it consistently with duty. He went away, and the vote for the two propositions was unanimous." Full of these high and generous feelings, he was grieved at the proposition of a larger grant than that which had been named by ministers. He approved indeed of the increase and voted for it, and spoke as well as voted for a public monument to Mr. Perceval; but he would have far preferred the honour of an undivided vote to any mere increase of its amount; and he comments with some indignation upon the opinions which he met with at a private party. "Lady C. for getting all the money that they could. How very low and mercenary people are! I see plainly that they think getting ever so little more money, to be got, if at all, with a struggle,

and as the triumph of a party, worth all the handsome and the honourable in the world; forgetting all the invidious constructions which will be put upon it in the present state of the country."[35]

Meanwhile he took a forward part in the honour rendered to the late minister's memory. "May 14th. To the Prince of Wales with the whole House to take up the address about poor Perceval. Then to Stephen's, who had yesterday been taken very ill, quite overcome with distress at Perceval's death." His own feelings were deeply wounded. "Perceval," he says in his private Diary, "had the sweetest of all possible tempers, and was one of the most conscientious men I ever knew; the most instinctively obedient to the dictates of conscience, the least disposed to give pain to others, the most charitable and truly kind and generous creature I ever knew. He offered me at once a thousand pounds for paying Pitt's debts, though not originally brought forward by Pitt, and going out of office with a great family." "Oh wonderful power of Christianity" he adds upon the following Sunday![36] "Never can it have been seen, since our Saviour prayed for His murderers, in a more lovely form than in the conduct and emotions it has produced in several on the occasion of poor dear Perceval's death. Stephen, who had at first been so much overcome by the stroke, had been this morning, I found, praying for the wretched murderer, and thinking that his being known to be a friend of Perceval's might affect him, he went and devoted

[35] Diary, May 13. [36] Journal, May 17.

himself to trying to bring him to repentance. He found honest Butterworth trying to get admittance, and obtained it for him and Mr. Daniel Wilson, whom at my recommendation he had brought with him. The poor creature was much affected, and very humble and thankful, but spoke of himself as unfortunate rather than guilty, and said it was a necessary thing —strange perversion—no malice against Perceval. Poor Mrs. Perceval after the first grew very moderate and resigned, and with all her children knelt down by the body, and prayed for them and for the murderer's forgiveness. Oh wonderful power of Christianity! Is this the same person who could not bear to have him opposed by any one?"

This shock coming at a moment when positive distress had stirred up great disturbance in the country lowered for a time his usual tone of spirits. "The state of the West Riding manufacturing districts is dreadful—next to rebellion, smouldering rebellion—great military force sent down, and now, but too late, vigorous measures taking. The aspect of affairs is very gloomy. Who shall say whether poor dear Perceval's death may indicate evil to come, or that a reversion of his counsels is needful for our safety? Yet I own the loss of a man so truly good, and so favourable to all religious plans, wears an alarming aspect. . . Alas! I fear that Mr. Henry Ryder's being a bishop, as humanly speaking he soon would have been, will be prevented."[37]

Yet though in some degree depressed, he took a

[37] Diary, May 16.

calm and reasonable view of the troubled face of things before him. To Mr. Hey he opened at this time his mind.

"London, May 15, 1812.

"My dear Sir,

Alas! into what times are we thrown! I cannot help thinking I see the source of that savage spirit which prevails so much. The reverence for authority, and law, and rank, and high station, has been effaced from the minds of the lower orders; and where the fear of God has no place, the consequence is that all control is withdrawn from the bad passions of men. To this cause I think may be added the modern system of making expediency the basis of morals and the spring of action, instead of the domestic and social affections and the relations of life and the duties arising out of them. Not that the lower orders understand this generalizing abstract way of thinking and feeling; but the opinions and emotions which are taught and imbibed in this school, receiving their stamp in the mint of the higher orders if I may so express it, obtain a currency throughout the inferior classes of society. I trust we are introducing the true remedy, indeed the only remedy of our diseased nature, by teaching the mass of our people the knowledge of the Scriptures. Surely it is an indication of the favour of the Almighty, that we have been enabled to spread so extensively the system of education. I must also ascribe much to the seditious publications which have been circulated so industriously.

"It is no small pleasure to me to believe that Mr. Perceval had an habitual desire to please God; and I doubt not he looked to Him with unfeigned humiliation, through the Redeemer. It is really an honour to our House, that his private virtues were so generally recognised among us. How much I wish that I may not hear that in our county the account of Mr. P.'s death, and of the horrid circumstances which attended it, was received with joy and exultation, as in Nottingham, Leicester, and I fear other places! Well, my dear Sir, 'there remaineth a rest,' and pray for me and mine, that we may enter into it after the short voyage of this stormy and tempestuous life. With kind remembrances to all your family,

I remain, my dear Sir,
Ever your sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"William Hey Esq."

But though for a moment, to the honour of all parties, the strife of politics had been hushed over the bier of the departed minister, it was not for long that the busy stream of life could be chained by such a charm. "I hear," says Mr. Wilberforce upon the 16th of May,[38] "that the ministers left are trying to get Wellesley to act without being at the head, and Vansittart as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of course Canning as one of the Secretaries of State. 20th. A discussion at Thornton's about a meeting for the poor—about which the opposition cold, who it is

[38] Diary.

probable wish to have it supposed that the true way of serving the poor would be to rescind the Orders in Council. Nicholas Vansittart made Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Liverpool to be First Lord of the Treasury. Wellesley and Canning refused their co-operation, it is said on the ground of not giving up their opinion on the Catholic Question. I own I do not see how the ministry can stand the battering of the House of Commons. Perceval himself did it very ill the first session—from Mrs. Perceval's illness."

It was clear that the new ministry would not enter peaceably on office. Upon the 20th Mr. Stuart Wortley gave notice that he would, on the following day, move "An Address to the Regent for a strong and efficient Administration," in the hope of thus stopping the formation of the ministry. On the 21st Mr. Wilberforce communicates to Mr. Bankes the exact state of things.

"London, May 21, 1812.

"My dear Bankes,

We want you here most sadly. You must have seen, before this reaches you, the motion which Stuart Wortley is to make to-day. The opposition say fairly that they regret it. The truth probably is that they all remember the transactions of 1784, and the danger of calling into action the spirit of loyalty in the House of Commons; yet the Prince of Wales is not beloved as the King was, nor is there a Pitt to stand the brunt of the assailants. For my own part, under all the circumstances of the case, I cannot think we are

warranted to agree to such a motion as Wortley's. The general constitutional principle of the right of the Crown is clear, and I think it is not to be got over by the consideration of circumstances, which however notorious, by being in the newspapers, to us who live in London, form no parliamentary ground of proceeding. I believe that both Wellesley and Canning overrate their weight in the country, though let the latter have the opportunity of exhibiting himself, and he would gain it. Really your being forced away just now is very unfortunate for others, though not perhaps unpleasant to yourself. Let me have a line from you.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Lord Liverpool sent to desire to see me to-day, but I had a fair excuse for not going, and so declined it."

On these grounds he opposed Mr. Stuart Wortley's motion. "Spoke too soon after dinner for me, but well. It was to the same effect as our argument about the previous negative in 1784. But when just going to a division Ryder got up, and most unwisely called up Canning and even forced him, quod Ithacus velit, to refer to a theological paper of the Cabinet's. Canning very clever, and Wortley's motion really made for him and Wellesley, though carried by the numbers of the old opposition.[39] The division lost by ministers, by 172 to 176, but foolish wranglement

[39] Diary, May 21.

about presenting the Address. 26th. I hear that Lord Wellesley, who sent to, had conferred with Lords Grey and Grenville, and had got them to concur on principles so as to be accessible; but on making report to the Prince Regent, it would not do. I hear even worldly people take offence at ——'s loose character for the head of the administration of the country. Poor dear Perceval, how much his loss is felt! How much they who talked slightingly of him, now acknowledge his merits! 27th. Wellesley, it is said, could not make a government, so Earl Moira called to the Prince Regent. 28th. Nothing settled about the ministry, certainly the Prince has seen all kinds of people, and is very nervous and distressed; Sheridan told me this afternoon that the several parties were farther off from agreeing than ever. Others said that Lord Sidmouth was then with the Prince. Lord Moira certainly was with him yesterday; and a good authority told me that the Prince was quite friendly with him, and would yet show what are his own real feelings about the Roman Catholics. Pitt (this evidently pointed to me as Pitt's friend, and to justify the Regent) had told Fox that he never would force the King—intimating, that the Prince is acting with a view to his father's peace." The same day he forwards into Dorsetshire the last accounts.

"Thursday, May 28, 1812, five o'clock.

"My dear Bankes,

It is strange, but true, that nothing is yet settled at Carlton House. At this moment I hear from Mr. Howard that Lord Sidmouth is with the Prince

Regent; I really believe that no arrangement is consented to. If I hear any thing which can be depended on, before the post goes out, I will send it you. The mere rumours of the House, like your western fish in summer, being far from good when fresh will not bear the carriage into Dorsetshire. I have put off the Bill to the 5th; the call you see is deferred for a fortnight.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. I have since heard, and I believe it is true, that Perceval's friends will be divided, and above all that —— is to stay in. This will indeed show a tenacity which does not like to lose its hold."

The obstacles to all arrangement still continued to exist. On the 31st, "no ministry" was "yet formed." On the 1st of June, Mr. "Canning declared that Lord Wellesley was authorized to make a ministry."[40] On the 2nd all was "said to be off because the Prince wishes to preserve a predominance in the Cabinet for the old ministry; but this" he judged to be "impossible." At length upon the 8th he "went down with Bankes to the House, and to our astonishment found that Lord Liverpool was first Lord of the Treasury, and empowered to form an administration. Canning not to join him, but only the old set and the Sidmouths. How striking is Canning's example! Had he fairly joined Perceval on the Duke of Port-

[40] Diary.

land's death, as Perceval offered, he would now have been the acknowledged head, and supported as such. But his ambitious policy threw him out, and he sunk infinitely in public estimation, and has since with difficulty kept buoyant. Our House stormy—but all put off till Thursday, Wortley's motion to condole with the Prince Regent. I went to House of Lords, and heard part of the debate—Lord Wellesley charging upon the old government, Liverpool, &c. the dreadful personal animosities. Lord Grey declared with unambiguous clearness, that he broke off the treaty with Lord Moira on account of Lord Yarmouth &c. continuing in the household." Yet upon the 11th, in the debate upon Mr. Wortley's motion, "it appeared to our astonishment from Lord Yarmouth, that they had told Sheridan that they (Lords Hertford and Yarmouth) meant to resign. I once up to speak and fully prepared; but abstained afterwards, because I remembered Lords Grey and Grenville's good service about Abolition, and would not condemn them now when so pulled down." Upon the 17th he was at the "House to hear Sheridan's explanation —he taken ill and stopped." Upon the 19th this explanation was renewed, when it is called by Mr. Wilberforce, "most twaddling." It amounted to little more than a compulsory confession, that in his conduct of the late negociation he had suppressed this important concession. Thus the ministry entered upon office. "It would have been far the best course," in Mr. Wilberforce's judgment, "to have made the Speaker, Premier; under him Canning

might fairly, and would, act. And so all the independent part of the House and of the country would be combined with known talent and habits of business." All however were "astonished at the first division, (June 11th,) many thought that ministry would scarce have carried it, whereas 289 to 164. Yet in spite of this apparent strength, government did not dare to face the storm which the distresses of the country had raised against the Orders in Council. It was immediately whispered that a change of their policy might be reasonably looked for. I heard it from good authority to-day, that the chief is quite undecided; but from the Duke of Norfolk I am assured that they will be at an end almost immediately. He had been with the Prince Regent between 11 and 12, when it was so understood." Upon the 16th, Mr. Brougham brought on his motion for their entire repeal, when to his "astonishment government gave way, and completely gave them up, yet most awkwardly." "They allege shabbily the French decree, and when at a meeting at Lord Castlereagh's we urged that the decree was a forgery—Aye, said Castlereagh, but one does not like to own that we are forced to give way to our manufacturers. Stephen inexpressibly grieved at ministers' concessions, and wanting to go out of parliament—kept in by my advice."[41]

The manufacturing districts were still in an alarming state of "smouldering rebellion," caused in great measure by extreme distress, but fomented by fac-

[41] Diary, June 24.

tious and designing men. "I had a good deal to do," he tells Mr. Roberts, "with originating the Association for Relieving the Distressed Manufacturers; and the plan would have answered all the ends we had in view but for the vile breath of party, which (mixing with every thing, and spoiling all it does mix with) tainted our project in the bud by a perfectly false report that it was intended to prevent the necessity of rescinding the Orders in Council. This operated so much against us that our funds have been far less ample than might have been expected." "Battling in the secret committee," he says, (July 8th,) "about inserting in the Report a passage as to seditious language. Tierney and Whitbread got it out. Castlereagh said not a word to support me . . that the disease was of a political nature which I had suggested in the most moderate language . . how shabby and ill-judged!" "It makes my heart ache," he tells Mr. Butterworth, "to think of a country like this, so highly favoured by the Almighty, and containing so much good, yet likely to be plunged into so much misery by the arts of the factious and the follies of the weak. It is not enough in our circumstances for men to be quiet and neutral, they must be active and zealous." He suggests therefore "that an impulse of this nature should be given expeditiously to the whole body of the Methodists." "The state of the lower orders in the manufacturing districts is such as I can illustrate only by the figure of the confluent small-pox on a human body; it is breaking out all over, and pains are evidently taken to interest the

agriculturists. My notion therefore is, that there should be a general association among the friends of law and order for the security of persons and property."

In this state of feeling he saw with deep regret the violence which politics engendered amongst some of his own friends. "—— is taking a most violent and factious part; talking of packed committees; attacking the magistracy: surely as unwise as mischievous." With such difficulties gathering round them, government were naturally anxious to strengthen their effective force; and negociations were again commenced with the hope of bringing Mr. Canning into office. With these he was immediately made acquainted, being anxiously consulted through their course by Mr. Canning. "Without the slightest overture from me, or even my beginning to talk politics with him, he took me aside and asked my opinion on the negociation. I told him very frankly, that I wished it to be so managed as to leave Nicholas Vansittart Chancellor of the Exchequer, believing that he would be a far better man for the situation than either Lord Castlereagh or himself. I told Canning, that I would give him an opinion as a juryman on the case which he submitted to me." The issue of this negociation was for some time doubtful; and upon the 29th he heard from Mr. Canning. "It ended yesterday. It has failed. The letter which you saw, and which I sent as you saw it with only a few verbal alterations, did not produce a satisfactory answer.—You have seen enough of my disposition in its course, to be sure

that I have gone far enough, perhaps too far, in concession." [42] This was not exactly his impression. "Canning on negociation failing," is his docket on the letter.—"Not wise on either side; but far more foolish on the other." This opinion he gave frankly; and Mr. Canning's answer "justifying failure of negociation," throws great light upon the actual state of parties. "When I found that the determination was to keep the substantial management of the House of Commons in the hands of Lord Castlereagh, I was no longer anxious to save appearances. I had wished to provide for the public good, not for personal feeling.

"Many people say, and you seem inclined to adopt their reasoning, 'The lead after all is merely a feather, what signifies it in whose hands it is?' Others say, 'Why not let Lord C. have it nominally? It will in effect devolve upon yourself.' Such has been the language of the Regent; and such that of many other well-meaning common friends. Now to the first of these arguments, I answer that it is founded in a mistake. To the second, that it is (unintentionally no doubt) a suggestion of dishonesty.

"1. Is the lead a feather? What is the definition of it? It is that station in the House of Commons which points out him who holds it as the representative of the government in that House, the possessor of the chief confidence of the Crown and of the minister. Its prerogative is, that in all doubtful questions, in all questions which have not been previously set-

[42] Right Hon. George Canning to William Wilberforce Esq. July 29.

tled in Cabinet, and which may require instant decision, he is to decide—upon communication with his colleagues sitting by him undoubtedly, if he be courteously inclined—but he is to decide, with or without communication with them, and with or against their consent.

"Now is this a feather? Or is it substantial authority? But perhaps this is mere theory, and the case never occurs. Look back a few weeks only to the debate on the Orders in Council. Recollect that it might have happened that I should have been sitting by Lord C.'s side on that night. And I entreat you to figure me to yourself in that situation, while he was giving up to Mr. Brougham's honour and glory, (not to peace with America,) by three or four successive gradations of concession, a measure which had been for five years the standing policy of the administration.

"He might be right, and I wrong, in the view of the measure itself. It might be right to give it up. It could not be right to give it up in such a manner; so spiritless, so profitless, and so senseless. But right or wrong, the giving up such a measure in such a way, was surely a pretty substantial exercise of a pretty substantial authority. And it was *that* authority that I should have confirmed to Lord C. if I had agreed to serve under him, as leader or minister of the House of Commons.

"2. If I had so agreed, it is not a mistake merely, it is a suggestion of dishonesty, to say that the station in which I so bound myself to maintain him would

have devolved upon me. I must not have suffered it to do so. I must have rejected and repudiated it. If the troops had wished to salute me Imperator in the field of debate, I must have said, 'Nay, my good friends, *there* is your commander. I have sworn to maintain him such, like him as you may.' And yet I will venture to affirm that no effort on my part to reject for myself, and to preserve to Lord C. the station of command, would have prevented him from saying in three weeks that I was studiously labouring to deprive him of it. Pray therefore be not led astray (nor let others where you can help it) by the notion that I have been squabbling about a trifle.

"Nothing indeed is a trifle which by common consent men think otherwise. But exercise of discretion upon great occasions in the House of Commons, is certainly no trifle at any time. Much less in times when great occasions occur daily, and when the government of the country is (too much perhaps, but is) essentially in the House of Commons.

"If I could have placed this power fairly *in medio*, I would have conquered, or endeavoured to conquer, all my other feelings of reluctance. But to place it, and to engage to maintain it, in his hands, in whose it now is, and then to place myself under it, would have been not only a sacrifice of pride, but an extinction of utility.

I am ever, my dear Wilberforce,
very sincerely and affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING."

He much regretted this conclusion, and "thought upon the whole that government was wrong, because Canning would consent to any terms which should place him and Castlereagh on equal ground; and considering his real superiority I think that was enough to offer."[43] "It is foolish," he tells another correspondent, "in the government not to add him to their number, for he really was not exorbitant in his terms. * * * I cannot help thinking that if the negociation had taken place at the beginning of a session rather than at the end of it, the issue of it would have been different."[44]

The session meanwhile was closing busily. The Toleration Act, the Distressed Counties' Bill, Catholic Emancipation, and the "Peace Negociation, when Canning's speech" was "beautiful,"[45] were crowded into its concluding weeks. In the midst of all this public bustle and political contention, it is most refreshing to turn from the entries of his busy nights and hurried days to the record of his inner feelings. He was now again separated from his family, and his letters to them breathe the simplest and most natural affection. The troubled gusts of politics never ruffled its peaceful current. "I feel," he tells his sister, "as if I were unkind in never writing to you, and I have often thought of doing it. But every day brings with it claims upon my time far beyond my powers of satisfying them. Yet nothing can ever prevent my having at liberty for your use my kindest thoughts and affections."

[43] To Henry Baukes Esq. [44] To James Stephen Esq.
[45] Diary, July 21.

"For once," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce who was travelling with his children to the coast, "I rejoice in an east wind, since I recollect that it will meet you and prevent your all suffering from the heat . . . In comes John Villiers, and he has released me only by my absolutely forcing him out at half-past three, and I ought to have gone to town an hour ago . . . I have been sitting under the trees reading and writing. The only part of the garden which I did not enjoy, was one to which I went purposely to see how all looked—the children's gardens. Even the fullest exuberance of summer beauties could not supply the want of animal life. Barbara's gum-cistus is in high beauty, and the roses in full bloom. My own room produces something of the same melancholy sensation as the children's gardens; but I am going to dine at Babington's to meet Mr. Robert Hall, (the Dissenting minister,) whose shyness is such that he could not bring himself to come to me, though, hearing that he wished to see me, I wrote him a long letter to banish all such feelings, and settle about our meeting."

On the Sunday following he writes again from Broomfield, where he was passing one day with Mr. William Hoare. "After having dated my letter I need not inform you that the various rooms of this house, and walks of this place, call up many interesting recollections in which you all have the principal share. It was impossible for the main features of the place to be ever changed. The walk under the oaks and the opposite close one—the various rooms, &c. . . . I hope I do not look back on the past scenes without some of that gratitude which they justly

claim in overflowing measure. I am but poorly to-day, and have been robbed of the portion of time which I value more in common than any other in the whole week, that I mean which elapses between returning from church and dinner."

His affections were naturally lively, but it was not to this only that he owed the preservation, all through his busy life, of their early morning freshness. This was the reward of self-discipline and watchfulness; of that high value for the house of God, and the hours of secret meditation, which made his Sundays cool down his mind and allay the rising fever of political excitement. Sunday turned all his feelings into a new channel. His letters were put aside, and all thoughts of business banished. To the closest observer of his private hours he seemed throughout the day as free from all the feelings of a politician, as if he had never mixed in the busy scenes of public life. "O Lord, purify me, make me meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. I trust that I have grown in self-abhorrence, and in longing for deliverance from the burden of sin. O Lord, quicken, cleanse, soften me. How differently, even to a man who is used to religious views, do all things show when we are on a sick-bed! How little one can think at all in earnest in such circumstances! Oh what a business must it be to those who are on a sick-bed to have their attention first called to the subject, or their views corrected! Oh may I strive to tread in the apostle's steps, and forgetting the things that are behind, to press forward. O Lord, supply all my need out of Thy riches. Alas, in my

feelings and sudden impulses, if not in my settled temper, I am too solicitous about the praise of men. I abhor myself for this vileness; though at the very time when I hope I abhor myself, it is as if there were two men, two principles struggling within me. O Lord, to Thee I fly for refuge; O cleanse, soften, quicken, and glorify me. I have been much affected by hearing old Scott of the Lock for the first time these many years. The beginning of his sermon . . 'I have been young, and now am old' . . that twenty-seven years ago he preached for the first time in that chapel, was remarkably applicable to me; for then I first heard him at the beginning of my Christian course. Oh how truly may I say, that goodness and mercy follow me! And may I not hope that my being thus humiliated is a sign that the Saviour is knocking at the door of my heart, and that I am ready to let Him in? Mr. Sargent preached, and pleased us all greatly—simple seriousness, and consequent pathos, the character of his preaching."

These are samples of his Sunday thoughts; and to these was joined a constant guard over his temper. "What a blessing," he says, "is a cheerful temper! I felt most keenly ——'s behaviour about Bowdler, and his not coming to me; but for his sake, and I hope from Christian principles, I resolved to struggle against bad temper about it, and now all is over." Thus was his spirit kept unruffled by all the exasperating influences of the life he led; whilst he walked safely, with a cheerful seriousness and disengaged affections, in the heated and

infectious air of public life—in the world, but most truly not of the world—ever remembering the end. "How will all this busy and tumultuous world appear to have been all one great bedlam when we look back on it from a future state!"[46] "Heard," he says this spring, "of the death of —— ——," whom he had known intimately in the prodigal enjoyment of youth, and rank, and wealth, and beauty. "She died about 3 o'clock to-day. All the lower parts had been dead some time, but she would not believe she should die, (that way madness lies,) and reproved her daughters during her illness for looking as if they were going to a funeral. I heard that she was very irritable, and had no idea that she would see me; however I did call on Wednesday, and again yesterday, when she must have been dying."[47] "I was much affected last night after seeing poor S. in an agony of pain, with thinking what hell must be—pain without hope." "With all my defects and unprofitableness, I humbly hope that it is my main desire to please Thee. Oh may I walk softly, deeply feeling my own unworthiness, repenting in dust and ashes; guarding against self-deception, lest I lose the precious opportunities of communion with God."[48]

[46] Letter to James Stephen Esq. [47] Journal. [48] Ib.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JULY 1812 TO FEBRUARY 1813.

Summer at Sandgate—Occupations—Approaching dissolution of parliament—Retires from Yorkshire—County resolution—Visit to Leicestershire—Antelope—Letter to Lord Muncaster—Returns to London life—Parliament—Buonaparte—Russian meeting—Owen of Lanark—With his children—Private thoughts.

THE summer was far advanced before Mr. Wilberforce got off from London, "holding it a duty to stay till the last."[1] He reached Sandgate upon the 29th of July, and resumed his usual summer occupations. "My first employment must be writing—to clear away an immense arrear of unanswered letters and unread papers," which he tells Mr. Bankes "like your Dorsetshire shingles accumulate every season sorely to my annoyance, though I believe to the benefit of you Dorsetshire landholders. I hope to finish them this week." "Besides the mass of trash, I have letters for Europe, Asia, Africa, and America."[2]

As soon as the claims of duty were at all appeased he turned to the more pleasant task of writing to his

[1] Letter to Dr. Coulthurst. [2] Diary, Aug. 2.

friends, and some of these letters give a lively picture of the scene around him. To one Yorkshire friend he writes—

"Sandgate, near Folkstone, Aug. 11, 1812.

"My dear Osborne,

Would that you could have seen the terrific mass of unanswered letters which I brought with me to this place. I happen unfortunately to have just now an amanuensis who reminds me, as to his powers of letter writing, of the celebrated stanza, 'O reader, if that thou canst read.' The consequence is that during the sitting of parliament, whenever I belong to a morning committee which meets early, it is next to impossible for me to keep down my correspondence; and at this moment, though I have daily written much more than agrees with my health, (it is not that I suffer now in my eyes, but in my breathing,) I am still a deep defaulter, though not of unaccounted millions. In such circumstances it is rather a compliment to a friend not to be too eager in writing to him, inasmuch as it shows that your correspondence with him is not regarded as a mere matter of account.

"But somewhat too much of preamble. Mrs. Wilberforce and my children had been waiting for summer at this place, and here I hurried the moment we were released from our parliamentary attendance. Sandgate is one of the creations of modern English opulence. A number of very comfortable houses for warm or even moderate weather, with a library, a warm bath, and other appendages. The country by

far the most picturesque of any sea coast I have seen in the south of England. The hills so thrown about, and sometimes so fringed with wood, that you are almost reminded of the inferior (but quite the inferior) valleys in Westmoreland.

"Near us, there are also indications of our opulence which are not quite so indicative of our understanding. About a mile from us begins a canal which was formed when the alarm concerning invasion was the most generally prevalent. It runs parallel with the shore for about twenty-five miles; but I never yet talked with any military man, who conceived that it would oppose any serious obstacle to an enemy, who, besides the ease with which it might be crossed by portable bridges, might *tap* it without difficulty. Certainly its merits are far too deep to be discerned by unmilitary eyes. Seriously, I am told that two millions sterling must have been expended in fortifying this part of the coast. And yet I firmly believe all has been done with good intentions; but one is reminded of the principle on which Dean Swift, in his Directions to Servants, prescribes to them to act, and in which, to say the truth, they commonly are very ready scholars, that each servant should form the best judgment he can of his master's fortune, and then for his master's honour spend freely in his own particular department. The butler may say, Why, so much per annum will afford to be liberal in wine; the coachman may say the same of the stable, and so on for the rest. The number of Martello towers is very great; but unfortunately, instead of being composed of such massy blocks of

stone or marble, as defied our attack and returned the fire of our ships with interest in Corsica, for that was our model, they are built of brick, and I am assured the first cannon shot would beat a hole in them, and the centre being broken down or weakened, the twenty-four pounder would fall through with its own weight, and would bury itself in the ruins. I did not mean to give you this long history of our precautions against the landing of the enemy. Really the French coast appears so near, that I can scarcely wonder at our being somewhat excessive in our preparations to receive an enemy who was said to have 100,000 men within four hours' sail of us.

"All the public news you have from the newspapers at least as fresh as any private authority can give it you. * * *

"I must say farewell. I am summoned to a walk, and my children being absolute strangers to me during the session, they have a fair claim to me in the recess. Believe me always, my dear Osborne,

Yours very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

To Lord Muncaster he writes a few days later—

"Sandgate, near Folkstone, Aug. 15, 1812.

"To be inattentive to you, my dear Muncaster, must be to be ungrateful, for I am sure if there be any one who can, as of right, set up a claim to my constant recollection it is yourself; but you always allow

for me. . . . I had letters to write to all the four quarters of the globe.

"Perhaps you may not have heard of this little hamlet. I did not think there had been such a one on the Kentish or Sussex shore. The coast for three or four miles fronts full south, and the ground is thrown about in quite a fanciful way. In your country indeed you would not dignify our elevations with the name of mountains, but where every thing is on a scale their appearance is very respectable; and in the crevices between them there are pretty villages, and woods climbing up the slopes, which for the sea coast, generally so barren, are quite picturesque. From our chamber windows we can see the French cliffs quite plain, and the sight, when the mind begins to ruminate on the utter contrariety which there is in the two countries separated from each other by such a little strait, gives much matter for interesting and I am sure for thankful consideration. We have with us here a niece of Stephen's, and two or three young men absent from Cambridge during the vacation.

"You will not surely suspect from my having been all this time an egotist, that I have not borne in mind the residents of the Castle, nor the interesting event, which we have reason to expect about this very time if I mistake not. May the Almighty bless you, my dear Muncaster, with a happy, and they cannot be happy without being a good race of descendants. I remember before Mrs. Noel was married, Sir Charles and Lady Middleton's one child

seemed a slender stock for the maintenance of the family name, and now there are thirteen or fourteen living saplings. They are all likely to be the honour and delight of their friends and family. I never saw so large a covey of such excellent birds. Do, my dear Muncaster, let me know how you are going on. I can well conceive how your affectionate heart must be interested in your present circumstances. Once more, may the Almighty carry Lady L. safely through her approaching confinement, and bless you with a healthy grandchild.

"Of politics it is saying very little, to say I can tell you only what you already know, for you know, I doubt not, much more than I do. I was sorry I own that the negociation with Canning failed; the government certainly wants him in the House of Commons. What do you think of the probability of a dissolution of parliament? Do let me know your surmises, if you have any ground for an opinion. For my own part I own I never at all expected the event this year, till the very failure above mentioned. I now think it probable that a dissolution may be resorted to with the hope of weakening Canning's party; yet that would be a bad public ground. Farewell, my dear Muncaster.

Believe me ever
yours very affectionately,
W. WILBERFORCE."

"P. S. If Lord and Lady Lindsay are encastled among the mountains, I beg my kindest remembrances to them."

At Sandgate he was exposed to few external interruptions, and was therefore able to devote more time than usual to his children; whilst he indulged in "a little miscellaneous reading. Sometimes parts of the Reviews or poetry, Heber's Palestine, The Lady of the Lake;" and took part in "the general reading of the family—Rollin and Shakespeare. This afternoon in walking I ran over for an hour The Vicar of Wakefield. What an utter ignorance does it indicate of true Christianity! Morality is its main vital principle; yet the story, though strangely unnatural, is beautifully told and inimitably interesting."[3] "You will be pleased," he tells Mr. Roberts, "with a very liberal but really just critique on your friend Montgomery's Poems in the British Review. There is a great deal of good in that work, though in some things I differ from its principles. I do not know whether you are a political economist; but there is an excellent counter-essay on Malthus and his conclusions." "Reading Parke's Journal for two hours to-night. Most wonderful man! What astonishing vigour of mind, but for what a cause, alas!"

To these employments must be added attempts to benefit his temporary neighbours. It was one of his first cares to form an accurate estimate of the moral and religious state of the surrounding population. At Sandgate he found much to regret. "It is grievous," he laments to Mr. Stephen, "to see this place—hot and cold sea baths, library, billiard table, ponies, donkeys, every thing but a church, or chapel, or any thing

[3] Diary, Aug. 18.

of the kind, though it is a sort of preserve of the Archbishop's. There is not even a Sunday school. We are trying to get something of the kind set on foot." He was almost disqualified by feeble health from personal exertions in visiting the poor; yet what he could he did, even in this way; stopping often in his solitary walks to drop some word of wisdom for those who casually met him . . . "Thursday: walking early, met a boy aged fourteen, John Russell, who cannot read, and utterly ignorant of religion—did not know what would become of us hereafter — may this meeting be for good" [4] . . . while upon those whose circumstances made it possible, he continually pressed the happiness and duty of thus ministering to their wants. "Miss E." he says this spring, "now going on admirably. Her health and spirits improved, and she very active amongst the cottagers, doing them good. A most useful lesson taught by this; that the best course when any one is low-spirited and distressed with anxieties, is to set them to action in doing good to others. Trust thou in the Lord, and be doing good." [5]

But one important subject now pressed for instant decision. Lord Sidmouth had privately informed him that an immediate dissolution was at hand; and the time was therefore come, when he must make up his mind to retain or to resign the representation of his county. "I shrink," he says, when weighing all the arguments upon the subject, "from absolutely deciding to resign my situation as from annihilation. Yet my judgment commends it more and more; and

[4] Diary. [5] Ib.

it is not annihilation if I stay in the House, though not for Yorkshire. May the Lord guide me aright. The urgent claims of my children upon my thoughts, time, and superintendence, strongly enforce my relinquishment, and are the deciding consideration. My declining health and memory seem improved; but I ought not to be an occasional attendant on parliament if M. P. for Yorkshire. O Lord, give me wisdom to guide me rightly. I mean to spend a day in religious exercises, and to make this with my children the great objects with God."[6] His decision was soon made, and was announced two days afterwards in the following letter.

TO CHARLES DUNCOMBE ESQ.[7] DUNCOMBE PARK, YORKSHIRE.

"Sandgate, near Folkstone, Sept. 8, 1812.

"My dear Duncombe,

After much serious consideration, I have at last made up my mind on the important point on which I wrote to you some time ago—I have resolved to resign that high station with which the kind partiality of my Yorkshire friends has so long honoured me, and in which you have yourself so kindly, and actively, and perseveringly contributed to place me. The truth is, that I find I must either continue to allot less time and thought to my family than it justly claims, or that I must cease to be a constant and

[6] Diary, Sept. 6.

[7] Mr. Duncombe (now Lord Feversham) had been chairman of his committee at the last election.

assiduous member of parliament, which I am sure I ought to be if I undertake so serious and weighty a trust as that of the representative of the county of York.

"Yet I will fairly own to you that it is not altogether without difficulty that I have brought myself to form this determination; but my judgment being clear, and that after much and long reflection, (for it is more than a year that this plan has been in contemplation,) and my own opinion being confirmed by those of several of my best friends, I ought no longer to hesitate; and having come to a decision, you are the first person to whom I communicate it. The probability of a dissolution of parliament in the ensuing autumn is so strong, that it seemed right for me to make up my mind; and I will own to you that I wish it to appear clear that I am not influenced in my judgment by the fear of an opposition, of which, if I were to offer myself, I am clear there would be no probability. The higher orders are not liable to sudden changes of their opinions in cases of this sort, and I have every reason to believe (some which no one almost knows but myself, but which would be of very powerful operation) that I should be warmly supported by the great body of the clothiers. I hope you will not suspect me of not estimating at their due amount the trouble and expense which another contest would occasion to my supporters; but I own, that if I believed there were in a certain quarter any design to oppose me, that very circumstance would produce in me so strong a disposition to stand my ground, that I should find it very hard work to force myself

to retire, if I could do it at all—not, believe me, from personal motives, though I dare not affirm that they would not mix, but because I should no longer think it my duty so to do; for believing that four-fifths at least of the freeholders are friendly to me, I could not bear the idea of a member, be he who he may, being forced upon our great county by the one-fifth of the freeholders, against the sense of the other four parts, merely by the dread of the expense of a contest; which our experience in 1807 proves may be carried on for a sum by no means difficult to be raised in our county, without pressing too heavily on the candidate himself.

"But it is in confidence that to your private ear I thus whisper my secret feelings, and as strictly secret I beg you will consider what I have said. Though I have consulted none but very particular friends I cannot but suspect that there has been some leaky vessel, and that hence has arisen that abominable report of a compromise between Mr. H. Lascelles and myself, which would have been highly dishonourable to us both, though far more so to me than to him. Several friends however on whose judgments I place great reliance, are so earnest with me not to quit parliament altogether, that I have agreed to accept the very kind offer of a dear friend, and through marriage a near relation, which will probably place me in a seat in which my occasional attendance in the House of Commons will not be inconsistent with other claims. But let this also be strictly entre nous at present. I am doubtful as to the proper time of announcing my intended resignation publicly, and shall

be glad of your opinion on that head, on which I mean also to consult Creyke and another friend or two. If the dissolution of parliament should seem really likely, or pretty certainly to take place, it might, and I conceive would, become right for me to declare my intention without further loss of time; but if we seem likely to live through another session, the declaration might this year be premature. I cannot conclude without thanking you most cordially for all the kindness which I have experienced from you during my connexion with York; for though I am not vain, or rather foolish enough to ascribe your support to personal motives, which indeed would be a supposition dishonourable to yourself, yet I should be void of all gratitude if its emotions were not called forth by the long course of continued good offices with which you have favoured me. Let me again however earnestly request, that all I have said may be at present considered as strictly confidential.

"Let me beg you to present my own and Mrs. W.'s kind remembrances to Lady Charlotte, who, with all the family, I hope is well, and to believe me, my dear D. with real regard,

Yours very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His intentions did not long remain a secret. On the 21st, hearing from good authority that parliament was about to be dissolved, he sent "his resigning advertisement." On the 24th, he was "very busy writing letters, announcing my retiring. My

advertisement in the Courier to-day. Lascelles has notified to Wentworth House that he did not mean to offer. I humbly trust that I have done right; but I cannot say that I do not feel a good deal. Surely it is much to quit such a situation with a high character, and with the wishes of friends that I should retain it. I go to prayer. My heart is deceitful, I scarcely know myself what it wishes, still my judgment is for Bramber." To different friends he entered at more or less detail into the reasons of his conduct.

"Sandgate, Sept. 25, 1812.

"My dear Stephen,

You have probably seen by my advertisement that the Rubicon is passed. I cannot but own that I feel more than I expected from the sacrifice, and yet really it is very little that I feel. I mean it does not weigh down my spirits at all, or materially vex me. But it will be curious if, from Lord C.'s being out of England, there should be any illustration of the old adage, 'Between two stools,' &c. Kindest remembrances to my sister. I scribble in extreme haste.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

To Mr. Roberts he wrote upon the 24th—

"Sandgate, Sept. 24, 1812.

"My dear Sir,

I am pressed for time to-day, but I must send you a few lines because I should be sorry you should

first learn from the newspapers that I have at length made up my mind on a point on which I have been for some time deliberating, by resolving to resign the high honour (for such I really account it) of representing the county of York in parliament. The truth is, I begin to find that I have incompatible duties to perform; and I must either to the House of Commons, or to my family, allot less of my time and thoughts than they both (so long as I continue M. P. for Yorkshire) would justly claim. I therefore have no other course to pursue than that which I have resolved to adopt, and which by the way has been under my consideration ever since the first commencement of our confidential correspondence.

"If indeed I could be satisfied with attending as county members in general do, I might still continue your representative. But it appears to me, that professing a stricter religious creed (if I may so express it) than the world in general, I ought to be proportionably stricter in my practice also. There is not one precept which is more frequently repeated in the New Testament, no principle of conduct which is more strongly enforced on our practice, than that of walking worthy of our Christian calling; and I have had no better way of showing my attention to this injunction, than by discharging the duties of my parliamentary station with more than common diligence. I should be ashamed of all these egotisms if you and I had not agreed to be unreserved in our communications. I have however to acquaint you further that my friends have been, in general, so decided and strong

against my quitting the House of Commons altogether, that I believe I shall still continue in it, at least for a time, though in a seat which will not impose on me the obligation of such constant attendance. I can truly assure you, (and I beg you will take any proper opportunity of stating this, because I should be sorry the motives of my retiring should be misunderstood,) that I have not been in the least influenced in my decision by the fear of an opposition, for I never conceived that there would be any. Mr. H. Lascelles, who was talked of, had been as I knew canvassing Pomfret, and giving recent indications of attention to that borough. But I must break off. Indeed I have been drawn on much more than I meant.

"I will enclose an advertisement which I will thank you to get inserted in the Sheffield newspapers Believe me, with esteem and regard,

Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

To his old brother "Independent" Bankes, he thus announces his intention.

"Sandgate, Sept. 26, 1812.

"My dear Bankes,

I have been intending day after day to write to you before I received your last, but I have been much interrupted lately, and not able to keep down my letters; so that an accumulation took place like that of the coaches in the Strand on a stop at high noon. But my object in taking up my pen at this

late hour of the night . . for such it is, and Mrs. Wilberforce, &c. all gone to bed . . was to satisfy the kind solicitude which from long experience I know you will feel on my account, in consequence of the advertisement which you will have seen or heard of, announcing my resignation of my seat for Yorkshire. You will I know be glad to hear, and would probably conclude, that I am to occupy a seat which will allow me to spare more time and thought to my family, and to be a less constant attendant in the House of Commons.

. "My advertisement really states my true reason. I did not in the least expect a contest. Farewell, my dear Bankes. Believe me, with kind remembrances to all your family,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

This unexpected announcement was very variously received. Those who had witnessed the amount of labour which his sense of duty had long imposed upon him, and compared it with the powers of his slight frame and tender health, rejoiced in his decision. Such was Mr. Bankes's judgment.

"Sandgate, Sept. 29, 1812.

"My dear Bankes,

It gives me real pleasure to find you approving of the step I have taken, on the supposition of its being associated with that which does actually accompany it. I am not quite clear whether or not I told you in my last, though I think I did, that Lord Cal-

thorpe, a near relation through Mrs. Wilberforce, and a particular friend, had in the kindest manner possible pressed me to represent Bramber, and to consider it quite as my own—which, brought in by him, I really can do. I believe on the whole also that I am pleased with your own determination not to contest the county; though it is a growling sort of satisfaction too that I must express, for it really is a shame that such a competitor should be preferred to you. But I still think that I shall see you M. P. for Dorsetshire. I should have thought Morton Pitt would have had enough of it.

"I am a little doubtful whether or not to go down into Yorkshire to take my leave. It seems the natural course; but a friend tells me, that some of the oppositionists throw out that I am wishing to be invited to continue in my seat. This impression will however be counteracted by my being known to have been elected for Bramber. How does this strike you?—I must break off.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His Yorkshire friends, almost to a man, lamented his decision. "You cannot be ignorant," writes one of them, "that by the nation in general you are looked up to as the advocate of religion amongst the higher orders of society, and particularly in that legislative assembly, of which, happily for this country, you have so long been a conspicuous and efficient member." County reasons too increased this feeling.

After mentioning the general grounds of his regret, Mr. Morritt adds his fear "lest it should throw the county into the permanent possession of the two noble Earls who alone possess length of purse sufficient to command it, or should perhaps lead to another great and fruitless contest."

Many were wholly unable to comprehend his motives. "Are you not surprised," Mr. Smyth of Heath asks Dr. Coulthurst, "at Mr. Wilberforce's withdrawing when he could have walked over the course without the least show of opposition. I hardly understand it." In other places to which the fame of his great contest had extended, and where it was not known that no opposition was now threatened, he was naturally thought to have shrunk from a repetition of its ruinous expense. "I find I have been universally misconstrued. My advertisement not clear enough when doing an unusual thing. It is supposed that I retired from apprehension of a contest, so I resolve to publish a new advertisement. Pressed to stand for Westminster, also for Lewes, and Dover."[8] "Would you believe it, R. really and gravely asked me to stand for Warwickshire, on the Birmingham interest, and be the business member. I am not yet quite insane."[9] "Several have told me that I must stand for Yorkshire, and many even sensible men supposed that I could be persuaded to come in for it, and did not give me credit for the sincerity of my resignation."[10]

The same idea had been current in Yorkshire, when

[8] Diary, Oct. 7. [9] Letter. [10] Diary, Oct. 8.

a fortnight before his death Sir George Savile retired from its representation. It now led many of his old supporters to express to Mr. Wilberforce their earnest hopes that he would not decline the trust which on the day of nomination would be forced upon him. "Such mistakes," he says, "have this good in them, that they bring real friends about us, and cause us to receive fresh proofs of their affectionate solicitude." His new advertisement was now published. "It tells a plain tale to contradict the idea that I was retiring from a contest. It is rather bald, but it will answer its end. Perhaps I did not enough bear in mind that my mode of acting and principle of conduct were both unusual, and therefore that my first address should be unambiguously clear. The fact is that I meant to explain more fully in person."[11] This resolution he reluctantly abandoned. "In announcing I would return my *personal* thanks, I acted," he tells Mr. Babington, "from the impulse of the moment. But it appears to me that my taking leave would tend to increase my personal interest, and give me a sort of personal hold on the affections of the people; especially for instance my going to the Cloth Halls at Leeds, and talking with the trustees, might tend to prevent their becoming the dupes of democrats. Yet I have just received a letter from honest Gray of York, telling me that the oppositionists of York throw out that I am fishing for an invitation to continue M. P. for the county, or it may appear like asking for a vote of thanks."

[11] Letter to James Stephen Esq.

To these reasons he gave way, and listened from his quiet retirement at Sandgate to the din of distant elections. "Babington's contest still continues. Henry Thornton's election secure. Both the Grants' ditto. Honest Butterworth's success reminds me of 'Them that honour me, I will honour;' he was quite the popular candidate, and the crafty, roguish counsel of his opponents was made to recoil on themselves. I feel somewhat like an old retired hunter, who is grazing in a park, and hearing the cry of the hounds pricks up his ears and can scarce keep quiet or refrain from breaking out to join them; but this is mere animal spirits. I still conceive my having gone down into Yorkshire might have done good in various ways. It would give far more grace to my retiring, and tend to confirm my influence with the middle ranks. What I should say would have somewhat of the solemnity of a death-bed declaration." "You allude," writes one of his constituents,"[12] to a player taking leave. That simile shocks me. Upon the stage 'et plaudite' was always attended by a 'valete.' I should not like to think that you were bowing to box, pit, and gallery; for I cannot help judging," adds the East Riding squire, "of an attendance on a Cloth Hall, as very much like looking to the shilling gallery."

The applause which he feared to seem to seek, followed him into his retirement. The county at large on the day of nomination recorded solemnly their judgment of his character in an enthusiastic vote of

[12] Colonel Creyke.

their unanimous thanks; and his own town of Hull followed with a similar memorial of affection. These two testimonials to independent merit are well worth preserving.

"At a meeting of the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of the county of York, assembled at the Castle of York on Monday the 12th of October, 1812, for the purpose of nominating proper persons to represent this county in parliament: Resolved unanimously, that the freeholders of this county, in the most grateful manner, return thanks to Mr. Wilberforce for his services during more than 28 years as their representative in parliament; for his unremitting and impartial attention to the private business of the county; and for his independent and honest performance of his trust upon every public occasion. They request that he will ever be assured of their wishes for his health and happiness."

His townsmen, at a meeting held by requisition at the Mansion House, (Oct. 20th,) unanimously wrote—

"Sir,

Although the thanks of the freeholders of this county for your eminent public services have been voted by a most numerous and respectable meeting held at York, we trust the intimate connexion which you have ever maintained with the place of your birth, will justify a claim to the privilege of expressing our peculiar approbation and regard. In common with a large portion of Yorkshire freeholders, we deeply regret the necessity of your retirement to a station of

comparative leisure; still some consolation is derived from the assurance that the benefit of your talents will not be withdrawn from the country at a period of unprecedented danger and difficulty. It were on our parts a vain attempt to review the important events of your political life, or to express an opinion upon each; but we can truly assert our firm conviction, that your conduct on all occasions has been regulated by principles of true and honourable independence.

"We cannot however pass unnoticed your indefatigable exertions to effect the abolition of an execrable traffic, alike inconsistent with British feeling and Christian principle — exertions which have enrolled your name among the illustrious benefactors of mankind, and the latest posterity will pronounce it with the reverence due to exalted virtue. To your perseverance through a series of years, this country is indebted for a practical application to others of those great principles of liberty, which are its pride and boast. The stain upon its character has, through your means, been effaced: for this, Britain owes a debt of eternal gratitude.

"As freeholders of Yorkshire resident in and near Hull, we indulge in the grateful feelings of an honest pride; we exult in the reflection that the illustrious names of those incorruptible patriots Marvel and Wilberforce adorn our records and shed a lustre on this the place of their nativity.

"Among other subjects of praise, it is not the least that on retiring from the representation of this county after a faithful service of twenty-eight years,

and possessed of the influence which such a station must necessarily command, you have not during that period accepted of place, pension, or rank, and have acquired no other than the distinguished title of the 'Friend of Man.'"

All parties indeed concurred in bestowing this well-earned applause on the retiring member. "There are great panegyrics on you now in all the papers." "What shall I say," he answers such a communication, "to your friendly enclosure? I really am embarrassed; yet in the epithet of 'friendly,' which I give it, I say much, when it is given with sincerity. But forgive me if I add that I was reminded of a passage in a letter from Archbishop Secker to Dr. Doddridge, who had expressed to the Archbishop (who was indeed a truly good, and therefore a great, man) his respect for his Grace's character in warm terms, of the sincerity of which the Archbishop had as little doubt as I have of yours. But your kind partiality has led you into a commendation of me, which I fear people in common will say brings to their recollection, that love (and why not friendship also?) is blind. I will not affect a greater degree of humility than I feel, or deny that I have been a diligent and upright representative; but when I take into account all circumstances, and more especially the natural effect of the newspapers (almost all of them more or less hostile to me) on the opinions which persons at a distance form of public men, I can only ascribe it to the kind providence of Him who turneth the hearts of

all men according to His good pleasure, that I have preserved so long, and still continue to preserve, the favourable regard of all ranks of my constituents."

This letter may be aptly followed by the insertion of a fragment of his own dictation, in which this long and singular connexion with the county is reviewed.

"Surely if I cannot but look back upon the circumstances which attended the first formation of my connexion with the county of York without recognising the traces of providential guidance, neither can I forbear to acknowledge the same gracious favour in my having so long continued in my honourable station. May I not well wonder that in a county accustomed to so much attention from its members, so much that was likely to give offence should be endured in me without the slightest expression of disapprobation. My religious character and habits might alone be expected to produce disgust. My never attending the county races, or even the assizes; my never cultivating the personal acquaintance of the nobility and gentry (an omission which would have been culpable, but for the expenditure it would have occasioned of time which I wanted for important purposes); my seldom visiting the county, sometimes not going into it for several years together;—all these might fairly have been expected to have alienated from me the goodwill of the freeholders; yet it never produced this effect, and I have every reason to believe that I never should have experienced another opposition. But I began to perceive traces of infirmity, which, from considerations alike of duty and prudence, determined

me to retire from my dignified station, and to accept the friendly offer of a seat in parliament which would absolve me from the obligation of constant attendance.

"Several of my Yorkshire friends were for the first time dissatisfied with me; and the letters which I received from various quarters were such as could not but be gratifying to any liberal mind. And here I cannot forbear mentioning a trifling anecdote, which is not without importance in the proof it affords that the general course of a public man may be approved by many who may not concur with him in his political opinions. On my way to the House of Commons one day soon after my having exchanged my seat for Yorkshire for the borough of Bramber, I met Mr. Sheridan. After we had exchanged salutations, 'Do you know,' said he, 'that I was near writing to you some little time ago?' On my asking the occasion of his intended letter, 'Why,' said he, 'I read in the newspaper your farewell Address to the Freeholders of Yorkshire, and though you and I have not much agreed in our votes in the House of Commons, yet I thought the independent part you acted would render your retirement from parliament a public loss. I was about therefore to write to you, to enforce on you the propriety of reconsidering your determination to retire, as I supposed, from public life, when I was informed that you were to come into parliament for Bramber; this information made me lay aside my intention.'"

His Sandgate retirement was now interrupted by the conclusion of his children's holidays; as he

wished himself to place one of his boys with a new tutor in Leicestershire. "On Friday last," he tells Lord Muncaster, "I set out from Sandgate with my two boys, to convey them to their respective places of education. I am now writing at the parsonage of Mr. Stephen's eldest son, in one of the most rural villages in Oxfordshire, secured almost to the point of being impregnable by the badness of the roads, but surrounded with beech woods, and truly dulcifying to the mind, as Burke would have said, when soured and fretted by the bustle and the business of life." "Yesterday," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce from the same place, "I was fully occupied until the evening, when it would have been almost sacrilege and ingratitude not to walk for half an hour at least enjoying one of the finest sun-settings and moon-risings which my eyes ever beheld. Then my dear boys were with me for some time, and we had some serious talk together. But though I was not occupied in writing to you, I was thinking of you all. A lovelier evening for meditating I never remember, and this is one of the finest mornings that eye ever beheld. * * * We had a very pleasant evening at Harrow, and in the morning the gradual accumulation of visitors at breakfast would have reminded you of Kensington Gore, both as to matter and to manner; and the Kensington Gore precedent was completely followed, for we some of us retired to have a consultation. But I must break off. I am delaying Stephen and the boys from a stroll in the woods; I will therefore only add a line or two. But I must tell you how delighted I was

with Lord Teignmouth's and all that I saw at Harrow. You would also have been gratified to see how Mrs. Samuel Thornton, always overflowing with benevolence, seemed to enjoy Kensington Gore,[13] especially, she says, the verandah. I do not think that I have had so much pleasure a long time as from having been able thus to contribute to the comfort of such kind friends at a time when they needed it. Young Perceval is a sweet young man, and in some of his features and motions so like his father that it was impossible for any one, who like me had known and valued him, not to be affected by seeing the son. Poor Perceval! You know the boys at Harrow speak publicly once a year, and all the parents and old Harrow men attend. Perceval, a week or ten days before he was murdered, had bespoke rooms at the inn that he might give a dinner to some friends and relations who were to hear his son speak Cardinal Wolsey's affecting speech in Henry VIII. 'In the midst of life we are in death.' I commend you all to God's protecting care, and to our gracious Saviour's goodness."

This journey is a good illustration of his parental tenderness. "I had resolved," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce from Leicestershire, "to set my face towards Cambridge this very day; but at length I thought it better, (after a rumination on my pillow when I lay awake against my will thinking of dear ——, who lay in a little bed by my side fast asleep, and whom I conceived I was about to leave for *good*,) to return southward. I feel so nervous about leaving

[13] His house now lent to these friends.

him, that but for shame I think I should bring him back again." "After having prayed with ——, and had a tête-à-tête with Mrs. ——, I set off for Leicester. Poor dear boy, he was much affected at parting with me, turning round and bursting into tears, first quietly, and afterwards with sobs. I was near crying too as I said to Mrs. ——, 'I must get off, or else—' but she I trust will watch over him with Christian care."[14]

Another incident on this journey must stand in his own words. "I am much grieved at having yesterday passed by, without stopping, a man in a ditch by the road-side between Barnet and London, whom two or three gentlemen were attending to. The Leeds coach with the back seats empty was just behind, and multitudes of passengers, so that help could not be wanted; yet it was wrong in all respects to pass by. It is an adjudged case since the good Samaritan parable—at which I should have been instinctively prompt. It was not hardness of heart I believe either. I was busy hearing Bowdler's paper upon Dugald Stewart, and I was flurried by the Leeds coach, on the outside of which were people who I thought knew me; yet if so it was worse—not glorifying God, &c. Lord, forgive me, forgive me! I felt (and now condemn it) more, that to-day is the anniversary (Oct. 25th) of my escape from drowning in the Avon, by a most providential suggestion."[15] So little had thirty-two years of public life hardened his affections, or blunted a most tender conscience. As he

[14] Diary, Oct. 25. [15] Ib.

drew near London, he wrote to Mr. Macaulay the following playful letter on the temporary housing of a grateful offering made by one of his unnumbered clients.

"Woburn, Oct. 23.

"My dear Macaulay,

I am come thus far on my way southward, and I mean, if it please God, to pass through London to-morrow to Battersea Rise, if the Henry Thorntons are there. I hope you will be able to meet me.

"If the antelope will not molest the residents in Downing Street, which by the account I conceive to be the case, it will be a kindness if they will keep it till we arrive at Kensington Gore, for it might not fare so well till then, very few of our servants being at home, and those few *not understanding antelopes.* I do not ask its consent to this arrangement, because I am sure there can, even from Africa itself, ferax monstrorum as it has been called, be no civil-conditioned creature which would not be glad to have dear Matthew for a patron; and I see not why 'love me and love my antelope,' should not hold true, as well as 'love me and love my dog;' and as I am sure Matthew loves me, Q. E. D.

Ever yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

On the 26th of October he was again at Sandgate, and purposing to "set apart a day for devotional exercises, in which my main objects will be Divine

guidance and blessing, as to my children, and for a blessing on my new plan of life. For guidance and strength to walk in the right path. Oh what cause have I for gratitude!"[16]

His short London visit had brought before him Abolition matters, and the day after his return he wrote to Mr. Stephen.

"Sandgate, Oct. 27, 1812.

"My dear Stephen,

I ought to let you know that I have this day written to Lord Castlereagh, to urge on him the adding a supplemental article to the treaty with Sweden, by which we should agree mutually to combine our exertions for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. I have not seen the newspapers at all regularly during my ramble; and therefore had not heard of our having made any treaty with Sweden, till Macaulay told me of it on Saturday last at Henry Thornton's. I mentioned to Lord Castlereagh that you were on the point of returning to London if he should wish for your advice. Indeed after the joint address of the Lords and Commons a few years ago, ministers themselves ought to have anticipated our application. Macaulay will tell you that St. Bartholomew's is quite a mart for the Slave Trade, whence, he adds, the poor creatures are distributed among our own islands and those of other powers. As we shall meet I hope in less than a fortnight, we may then talk over Abolition topics; but as we can never expect the state of parties or of par-

[16] Diary.

liament to be more favourable to our cause, I own my judgment will be decidedly for our trying to carry the Register, if we can make any thing of Lord Grenville; I had almost said whether we can or not.

I am ever yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

On the same day he sent Lord Muncaster his hearty congratulations on the birth of a grandson.

"Sandgate, Oct. 27, 1812.

"My dear Muncaster,

I returned to this place last night after an absence of three weeks, in which I was moving from place to place on calls of business or of friendship, and never pausing above two or three days at one house. On my way homeward, I received your acceptable postscript; and it is one of my first occupations after my return to send you our best congratulations and kindest wishes. I can conceive grandchildren to be sources of more unmixed pleasure than children themselves, because in their case we feel less responsibility, and consequently less anxiety. I can see you dancing the bantling in your arms, and being as young as old Agesilaus is reported to have been.

"You must have heard all that passed at the Yorkshire election. This is too long a theme to enter upon now, for you may well suppose that after my letters have been accumulating on me for near three weeks I have a terrific mass before me. But before I plunge

into the mare magnum, as poor old Dundas used to term it, I was determined to sail up the river Esk, and pay my respects to the new-born future occupant of the 'Luck of Muncaster.'

"Shall you come up before Christmas? I scarcely expect you. I hope government will not propose the measure which was talked of before the dissolution, by which we were to provide against our own possible mortality.[17] Surely this would be a very impolitic measure. I passed through London, but so quietly as to have heard no political intelligence which will not long ago have reached you. From Stanhope's[18] not coming into parliament again, I fear his stamina are suspected to be more affected than I had imagined. If so, I own I think he has judged rightly, and for the same reason I am glad our worthy old friend Hawkins Brown has retired, for age is not to be measured by years, but by bodily strength; for instance, I account myself full ten years older than most men of my own age, though by care I may, through God's blessing, and calculating according to human probabilities, attain to the ordinary duration of the life of man. In truth, if I could have been sure that this parliament would have died in three years, I might have consented to a renewal of my lease. But six years was a longer term than I durst venture to engage for. Indeed, as we grow nearer the great change, it is well to make still ampler preparation for it; though it is not necessary that we should for this

[17] In the event of the King's death.
[18] W. Spencer Stanhope Esq.

end retire altogether from public service; but to live under a more abiding impression of the uncertainty of life, and with dispositions better fitted for that condition of being into which we are probably ere long to enter, must certainly be right. For this end I find nothing more effectual than private prayer, and the serious perusal of the New Testament. But I am reminded that it is time for me to lay down my pen. So once more congratulating you, and begging you to give my best remembrances to Lord and Lady Lindsay, I am ever, my dear Muncaster,

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

To the eye of a stranger he appeared at this time full "ten years older" than he was; but more intimate acquaintance removed this impression. Delicacy of health had indeed set on him already some of the external marks of age, and a stoop which he contracted early, and which lessened his apparent stature, added much to this effect. But the agility of his step, the quickness of all his senses, (though he only heard with one ear,) his sparkling eye, and the compass and beauty of his voice, contradicted all these first appearances. And those who listened with delight to the freshness and exuberance of thoughts, sometimes deeply serious, sometimes playful and humorous, which enriched his conversation, could hardly believe that he had long borne the weight even of manly years. At the breakfast table, and again from the setting-in of evening until midnight were his gayest

times; at the last, especially, all his faculties were in the fullest exercise; and when being read to in his family circle, which was his delight, he poured forth all his stores, gathering around him book after book to illustrate, question, or confirm the immediate subject of the evening.

On the last day of October he left Sandgate, and halted with his family for near a fortnight with his old friend Lord Barham. Ever watchful of Abolition interests, he wrote hence to Mr. Macaulay.

"Barham Court, Nov. 4, 1812.

"My dear Macaulay,

I entirely concur with you in opinion concerning the Swedish Treaty topic; and before I heard from Stephen, I had written to Lord Castlereagh on the subject. I hope Stephen will not, I dare say he will not, express to Lord Castlereagh any of the doubts, or more than doubts, which he has stated to me, and which I confess surprised me. I am persuaded that, besides the particular benefit to be derived in each particular instance from ministry's compliance with our wishes, we serve the cause instead of injuring it by applying to them on all fair occasions, because we show them that our attention is wakefully directed to the subject, and therefore that they also must be awake. Farewell.

I am ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Zachary Macaulay Esq.

"P. S. My little girls are in love with the antelope

from Matthew's description. As we shall probably go home by Downing Street, I shall have hard work to keep them from calling on Friday to gratify their eyes."

On the day following he wrote to Mrs. Hannah More.

"Barham Court, Nov. 5, 1812.

"You really provoke me, my dear friend, when you begin your letter by saying that you are always sorry to break in upon me. As if you did not know, that to hear from you is always to me like a piece of fine smooth-shaven down to a horseman who is almost worn out by plodding his weary way through deep clayey roads, or picking his steps among stony paths. The very animal he rides is revived by the change, and instinctively sets up a canter. I suppose my reader is the animal's archetype; though he, less lively than the four-footed performer, does not seem to partake of the animation. Or rather, to speak the truth, he would not, for I need not assure you that I do not commit your epistles to his perusal. The idea was suggested by his being at this moment at my side, in a state not unaptly described by my representation. * * *

"To see so little of you is a standing grievance of my life (I speak seriously). But you possess a first place in my heart. May the Almighty support and bless you. I am concerned for poor Patty also. But *this vile body* is to be the exclamation here below. By and by it will be, Thanks to God, who hath

given us the victory through Jesus Christ! Farewell. Let me hear from you occasionally, and never be so affected again as to talk of breaking in upon me.

"Mrs. Wilberforce desires me to send her kindest remembrances; give mine to the sisterhood, and believe me,

Ever your sincere and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Alas! alas! this sad war with America! I never felt any public incident so deeply. Yet on the whole I thank God I can lay my head on my pillow in peace, for our government is not chargeable with the blood-guiltiness; but Maddison, Jefferson, &c."

In the quiet hours which he could now command, he was looking forward to his London life, and resolving on such rules as he thought would then be useful to him. Above all he now determined, "when not unavoidably prevented by company or House of Commons, to take an hour, or at least half an hour, for private devotions, including Scripture reading and meditation, immediately before family prayers. Besides other benefits, one will be to send me back into society with a more spiritual mind, and to help me to preserve it through the evening, and to make the conversation more edifying and instructive. How can I expect a blessing otherwise? Oh let me reform here; it has been my standing sin of late: I must therefore remember that I shall find it difficult to adhere to the

reformed system. The best hope will arise from my bearing about with me a deep impression of the difficulty, and of my own weakness, and of the urgent need of Divine help.—Also aim at universal holiness, guard against self-indulgence, and love of human estimation. Oh how that vile passion will creep in! Even now it is at work fold within fold. Lord, Thou knowest me; I cast myself on Thy pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace." [19]

Upon his return to London, he set apart a day for more especial private devotions. "I have had serious doubts, whether or not it is right to do so when I have so many important subjects to consider, and so much to do; yet the examples as well as writings of good men, and above all, the Holy Scriptures, taking the precepts which directly treat of fasting and comparing them with others, warrant it. N. B. Christ's words about the demons, which expelled only by fasting and prayer. Then as to my being now extremely occupied, Owen's remark in some degree applies, (inference from Malachi,) that we should give God if needful our best time. O Lord, Thy blessing can render far more than a day's time as nothing even in my worldly business, and if the main-spring's force be strengthened, and its working improved, (cleansed from dust and foulness,) surely the machine will go better. Lord, what I do I trust is pleasing to Thee: accept and bless my service."

The next day was devoted to this purpose, and his Journal is full of his usual entries upon these occa-

[19] Diary.

sions——of humiliation for whatever sin a careful search detected in himself . . . "I put these things down, that I may fix, and ascertain, and re-consider my own corruptions and the deceitful working of my mind and passions. There are two souls within me; Lord, help me to expel the fleshly occupant" . . .

——of thankfulness; of prayer . . . "that I may plan my system of life wisely, and execute it properly in the new circumstances in which I am placed" . . . .

——of intercession . . . "for my dear children, now main and special objects with me; for private friends, and especially my god-children.

"As to my plan of life, I conceive that my chief objects should be—First; My children. Secondly; Parliament. Thirdly; When I can spare time, my pen to be employed in religious writing. Hints and thoughts for my intended book. Oh with what humiliation and thankfulness should my Practical View fill me! As I have certainly begun to find my faculties, especially my memory, (perhaps my imagination—but it may be only my memory,) decline, I should strive to make up for the declension by more pains; and now that I shall not be a constant attendant, and shall not have Yorkshire business, I must prepare more. I conceive it to be my duty to attend to this object; yet, O Lord, enable me to do it from first to last with a simple eye to Thy favour and Thy glory, and with less love of human estimation.

"Let me look over my 'grounds for humiliation,' my 'company regulations.' How sadly apt am I to lose all recollection of these, and of keeping my heart

when I am in society! Lord, strengthen me with might. Let Christ dwell, not merely occasionally visit, but dwell in my heart by faith. Let me cultivate more an habitual love of God—Butler and Barrow—habitual gratitude. Let me try some memorandum analogous to the phylactery. See Numb. xv. 38, 40."[20]

With such resolutions he returned to London life. Upon the 24th of November "the House met and we chose a Speaker. Dined General Calvert's to meet Sir Howard Douglas; fresh from Lord Wellington at Burgos—above 2000 men lost there."[21] The day following he took the oaths as member for Bramber; and on the 30th the business of the session opened with "Whitbread's amendment to the Address, recommending peace. We all against—Henry Thornton, Babington, and I—thought the general tone too warlike. Dec. 1st. House—I meant to speak rather for peace, but expressed my meaning imperfectly, and the newspapers putting in only what is calculated, as they conceive, to make me unpopular, and leaving out all the rest, I am made to be far more warlike than I am, or should have been supposed to be, if I had been silent. They omitted all I said about my thinking it a favourable time for treating, and that I hoped they would take every fair opening; but that giving them credit for this intention, (mentioning Lord Sidmouth in the ministry,) I would not hamper them, and probably injure the country's cause by instructing them to treat by a parliamentary direction; when

[20] Journal. [21] Diary.

they would feel bound to obey, and the enemy of course conclude that he might treat on terms proportionably more favourable."[22]

"I am made to appear," he writes to Sheffield, "an enemy to peace, to which I have long looked forward with eager and earnest expectation." High as are the interests on which two opposing ministers negociate in treating for a peace; they in fact are governed by the very same principles which decide two men who are but joining in the commonest intercourse of human life. It is the old question of demand and supply; and if the one party knows that the other *must* have his commodity, whether it be peace or a bushel of potatoes, (both melancholy subjects now, though in different degrees,) he knows too that he can have his own price be it ever so exorbitant; therefore parliament should never interfere for this object, except when it has good reason to know, first, that ministers will not otherwise endeavour to obtain it; and secondly, that on the whole, the benefits from peace on any terms, will be such as to render the loss likely to result from the circumstances in which the instructed minister will negociate a matter of no comparative importance.

"I congratulate you on the intelligence yesterday received. May the Almighty be pleased to prove to the warrior of the present day, as He did to a predecessor of old times, that he is but an instrument to accomplish the Divine purposes, the rod of His anger, and that when sufficient chastisement has been received, he can be at once checked in his career."

[22] Diary.

All eyes were now fixed upon this dawning of a better hope for Europe. "Grand news," says the Diary of Dec. 4th, "from Stockholm, about French armies. Buonaparte so surrounded that he can hardly get through—hemmed in, as wild beasts in the East, by different armies. Lord Bathurst not so sanguine, but still thinking the news excellent. Hiley Addington quite yields to it. I hurried over the bulletin, but had not time to examine it." These favourable tidings he hastily transmitted to the north.

"London, Friday, Dec. 4, 1812.

"My dear Muncaster,

I have used you scandalously, but had I used you ten times worse by my long silence, I should more than make up for my fault by my present intelligence, if you can read a paper I have just scribbled in Wharton's room—how rapidly scribbled you may judge, when you hear that he was standing by, waiting my having done. Really, really, the Almighty has brightened our prospects beyond the utmost hopes we ventured to indulge. I don't like to be too sanguine, but really I do not see how Buonaparte can get away, for Brogden, who knows the country and climate, says that the country is one waste of snow except the great roads, which are all blocked up by the enemy. I shall scarcely have time to go to Henry Thornton's, eat my morsel and go to the House; but many thanks for your kind letter. I meant to return poor Llandaff's letter, but must wait till I write next, not having it with me. I (we) rejoice in Lady Lindsay and Co.'s going-on,

and with every friendly wish, and best remembrance, I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Attended the House with unwillingness, (German Legion business,) not from opinion against it, but ignorance. Put off, and home early. Stephen came in at night and quite damped us, having examined the bulletin, and says it is only the old news, and that Buonaparte may in all have lost about 20,000 men. I hoped God had been pleased to dash this proud man at last to the ground through the natural consequences of his own ambition and injustice."[23] Yet in spite of Mr. Stephen's apprehensions the favourable news were soon confirmed. "Letters from Beauharnois intercepted, giving a wretched account of Buonaparte's situation—travelling back in a carriage with Berthier and Murat. Platoff very successful. Buonaparte is returned to Paris leaving his army in the lurch. He owns what fully implies its complete ruin. What scenes of horror has the ambition of this one bad man produced! Hammond tells us that when General Winzingerode was brought in prisoner with Nariskin, the latter ordered to be civilly used, and the former qu'il soit fusillé tout de suite, as a rebel of the Confederation of the Rhine But the officers would not obey."[24]

His time was now so fully occupied by important questions in the House of Commons, and pressing

[23] Diary, Dec. 4. [24] Ib. Dec. 5

business out of it, that as yet he found little increased leisure from his change of station, though he still looked forward to it in the spring, when the business of the "county had hitherto most engaged him." His Diary shows the nature of his present occupations.

"Dec. 7th. Breakfasters numerous, and not clear from company till time to go to British and Foreign Bible Society's monthly committee meeting, to get a grant of Testaments for the West Indies; 2000 willingly granted. To Babington's and wrote letters. Met Butterworth fresh from Ireland . . his communications show sad hostility of mind between Protestants and Roman Catholics . . then House. Moving for papers about Slave Trade at Cape, and Mauritius. Lord Wellington's grant of £100,000 to buy an estate, in debate Burdett was Cobbett, and Whitbread took a different line. After the House a discussion at Henry Thornton's with Babington, the Dean, and Stephen. At night home with the Dean. 8th. Fuller of Kettering breakfasted, and talked much about East Indian Gospel Communication plan. Then town, Manufacturers' Committee—Duke of Kent in the chair, and very civil. Then Hatchard's, letters—home to dinner—Stephen, Simeon, the Dean, and others—the House engaged on Lord Stanhope's Bullion Bill, a most intricate question—we are trying to stir up a spirit to relieve the poor. 12th. Forced to dine with Duke of Gloucester. One of his mixed parties—Lord Sidmouth—Vansittart—Hastings, quite aged. All splendid—Lord Sidmouth clever. Sheridan said of a person whom Lord Sidmouth does not like, O he

has an iron heart, but Lord Sidmouth has a fine spirit. 14th. To town to find out about Dr. B— from Yarmouth, who had written for £20, without which he with his wife would be ruined—could learn nothing —so sent it doubtingly. African Institution, and home. Voice not well to-day. Duchess of York took my antelope. 18th. Letters and callers till two. African Institution. House on grant to Russia £200,000 [25]—spoke but middlingly. 23rd. To town about twelve to meet Brougham at Lord Bathurst's about Parke's Journals. Heard of Russian meeting, and that Duke of York in the chair. Went to Crown and Anchor, and found Lord Liverpool, Duke of York, Lord Castlereagh, N. Vansittart, Lord Harrowby, Lord Buckinghamshire, and several under secretaries, and four or five Russian merchants—Samuel Thornton speaking—sixty or seventy common people—meeting utterly unknown—tried to get it put off; but being desired to speak, did shortly—rather pressing adjournment, but they had not presence of mind for it. Brougham had sent to know if any Whig, and then he would come. I pressed him to write to Lord Holland to make a second meeting. I fear the folly, if not worse, of not taking pains to have a full meeting, (perhaps for fear of having the business taken out of certain hands,) prevented more notice; and now there is danger of its being considered as

[25] A sum of £200,000 was voted for the relief of the sufferings brought upon the Russians by their gallant resistance to the common enemy. The meeting of the 23rd, was to raise funds for the same purpose by private charity.

cooked up between ministers and a few interested Russian merchants—sad, so to spoil a noble work which would have taken admirably, and have given rise to a noble testimony of national admiration, esteem, benevolence, and gratitude. 24th. Town—read Report, corrected from Allen's draught at Freemasons' Hall —distressed manufacturers—Duke of Cambridge in the chair—he had never heard of Russian meeting, nor Stephen. So vexed at the folly of its managers, that after talking with Brougham and Lord Bathurst, I wrote to Lord Liverpool and S. Thornton to get the meeting stated as a preliminary one before Christmas. 26th. To Lord Liverpool's by half-past eleven, to confer about undoing the evil done by the Russian subscription management. Lord Harrowby, Vansittart, S. Thornton came. Agreed upon notifying another meeting—acting on my advice. Still I fear all or a hundredth part of the mischief cannot be undone. Thence to secretary of Russian embassy, to tell him that the manufacturers wished to give supplies of manufactures.

"30th. Owen of Lanark, Dale's son-in-law and partner, breakfasted with me, and staid long talking with me of his plan of education, and of rendering manufactures and morals compatible." This visit was renewed soon after, and Mr. Grant and Henry Thornton met Mr. Owen by appointment. When Mr. Owen was proceeding to detail his schemes, he gently hinted that the ladies present might be suffered to retire from a discussion which must prove beyond their comprehension. Mr. Wilber-

force eagerly dissented from the proposition; and it was well for Mr. Owen that he yielded, for he had not read long before "Grant, Henry Thornton, and I were all fast asleep, and the despised ladies were his only real audience." "One of my great principles, Mr. Wilberforce," said the schemer, "is, that persons ought to place themselves in the situation of others, and act as they would wish themselves to be treated." "Is that quite a new principle, Mr. Owen?" was his answer, with that look of suppressed humour, which gave his countenance an archness of expression which no description can convey. "I think I have read something very like it in a book called the New Testament." "Very possibly it may be so," gravely answered the imperturbable philosopher. Yet such was his universal kindness, that Mr. Owen left him to tell others that Mr. Wilberforce was charmed with his discoveries. "Owen of Lanark," says his Diary, "with a new view of man—strange, fanciful speculations, and practical success amongst Dr. Dale's children. Grant and I fell asleep; but I kept his paper and ran over it afterwards. Strange that the Quakers, even the sensible Allen, admires it. So do the Socinians, or half Socinians."

Christmas had now brought his children round him, and he was again joining in all their business and amusements. "Being read aloud to" by one—"examining" another "in his history—watching carefully over all their tempers—taking them" one day "to the British Museum," and on another "to see the great fish, and to toy shops—running races with

them in the garden;" or a still greater pleasure, reading aloud through the long evenings. "Rokeby lent to me in quarto—I wait to buy the cheaper octavo. All earnest for reading it, and interested in it beyond measure; but chiefly for the story. Left off and locked it up during Sunday, and did not read it myself after the general reading, knowing that I could not finish it without sitting up late."

"I must put down," he says, amidst these various engagements, "that I have had lately too little time for private devotions. I must take at least an hour for them in the morning. I can sadly confirm Doddridge's remark, 'that when we go on ill in the closet, we commonly do so every where else.' I must mend here; I am afraid of getting into what Owen calls a trade of sinning and repenting. Yet where can I go else? Thou only, Lord, canst pardon and sanctify me. Oh what unspeakable comfort it is to cast oneself on the Saviour as a guilty, weak sinner in myself, but as trusting in the gracious promises of God through the Redeemer! Let him that is athirst come. Lord, I must flee to Thee, and cleave to Thee. Be Thou my All in All."[20] At times too, in these secret struggles of his heart, he laments that he was "unable to realize the presence of God. It was as if there had been a wall of separation that I could not penetrate or see over; and my heart dead and cold. Surely it is not enthusiasm to notice these sensations, as David does. Lord, renew and quicken me." But this was not his

[20] Journal.

common state. His secret entries testify that habitual peace, combined with the deepest humility, were in him the blessed fruit of keeping God's watch carefully. They are well expressed in an entry at this time. "I am just returned from a highly impressive sermon by Mr. Dunn. I hope that my sensibility is in some degree the effect of the Holy Spirit; the knocking of Christ at the door of my heart. I must not spend any of my few minutes before dinner in writing; but let me just record my feelings of deep humiliation, yet of confiding, though humble faith—looking to the Saviour as my only ground of hope. I cast myself at the foot of the cross, bewailing my exceeding sinfulness and unprofitableness, deeply, most deeply aggravated by the infinity of my mercies. I plead Thy precious promises, and earnestly pray to Thee to shed abroad in my heart more love, more humility, more faith, more hope, more peace, and joy; in short, to fill me with all the fulness of God, and make me more meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Then shall I also be better in all the relations of life in which I am now so defective, and my light will shine before men, and I shall adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things."[27]

[27] Journal.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FEBRUARY 1813 TO DECEMBER 1813.

Session opens—Catholic Question—East India Company's charter—Efforts for Christianizing India—Petitions—Debates—Death of Lord Barham—of Mr. Venn—Registry Bill—Portuguese Slave Trade—Lord Castlereagh—With his children—Letters—Sir John Sinclair—French privateer—Lord Muncaster's death—Visits—Barley Wood.

A BUSY session was now opening on him. "I am reading," he says, (Feb. 5th,) "on Catholic Emancipation, and thinking too. I grieve to see so much prejudice. Talking the question over with friends; one, though a most able man, not knowing that Dissenters may sit in parliament." This question now agitated all the country, and there were "meetings against Roman Catholics in all parts of England."[1] "I am very doubtful which way right." This was his only question; general popularity and party principle were no rule for him to steer by; and though he suffered keenly from shocking, upon such a question, the conscientious scruples of those whose principles he most esteemed, yet even this feeling could not for a moment bias his decision.

[1] Feb. 10.

"Lord, direct me," he prays on this question; "all the religious people are on the other side, but they are sadly prejudiced." "It grieves me to separate from the Dean, and all my religious friends; but conscience must be obeyed. God does not direct us to use carnal weapons in His cause." He displays at this time the exact balance of his mind in a letter to William Hey.

"Near London, Feb. 22, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

I have been and still am longing to devote my time and thoughts to the Roman Catholic Question; yet pamphlets and other documents lie unopened on my table. My opinion is far from made up on that momentous subject; and I heartily wish I could employ a few weeks in quietly studying and considering it. It is not however on this head that I now take up the pen to address you, though mindful of your late kind communications, I begin with a few words on it; and having touched on it, I will go on to add, that I am quite decided against granting to the Roman Catholics eligibility to *all* civil offices. My chief doubts are concerning their admissibility into parliament; and there is one consideration which I do not see that even you yourself, who to do you justice have considered the question more maturely than nineteen-twentieths of those who write or speak on it, have duly borne it in mind. The Bishop of Lincoln's charge, which is otherwise able, entirely leaves it out, and even proceeds on a supposition of there being no such consideration. It is that whatever the Roman

Catholics, if admitted into the House of Commons, could effect through the medium of law for establishing their hierarchy and injuring that of the Protestants in Ireland, they can do just as well (in one important respect better) through the medium of members of parliament, *called* Protestants, but who being elected by Roman Catholic voters, and having little or no real religion themselves, are implicitly subservient to their constituents' purposes. I say, they can serve the Roman Catholics even better in one respect, inasmuch as they do not call into action the opposite Protestant spirit in the same degree.

"But while the Roman Catholics thus possess parliamentary influence, they do not possess it in such a manner as to render it a personal privilege, or gratification to them; and therefore so as to give them an interest in the existing legislature; and to connect them to the Protestant system by the various ties which unite men who act together in parliament, and which would render it improbable that they would join a foreign enemy in separating Ireland from Great Britain; and where can be the wisdom of retaining the prison dress, when you have set the men at liberty? I must break off. I remain, my dear sir, with cordial esteem and regard,

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Under this view it was a mere question of political expediency. The principle had been long since conceded. Political power the Romanists possessed

already, and the only object was to provide for its being most innocently exercised. He was now almost convinced that this end would be promoted by a change of system; for that "the actual state of the laws," as he told Mr. Charles Butler, "so far from affording any security to the Established Church, or to the Protestant cause in general, augmented their danger; and so far from lessening or weakening the influence of the Roman Catholic church over its members, maintained and extended its force."

The Question was now coming before parliament. On the 23rd, he "dined at Bankes's with Canning. The former agreeably to his own amendment will vote against the Roman Catholics on Thursday. Canning wishes only to print the Bill this year." Upon the 25th came on "Grattan's motion for a Committee on Catholic Question, according to Canning's motion last year. Bankes spoke early against—Plunket excellently for. House till half-past two. 26th. Took an hour for private devotions, then time spent chiefly looking over Roman Catholic pamphlets. House. The debate not renewed till nine, so sat till half-past one, chiefly hearing Irish members. March 2nd. Preparing for debate on Catholic Question. Canning called, and I took him to town. House till four. Question carried 264 to 224."[2]

As yet, though he "had prepared" himself "upon this question," he "had found no opportunity for taking part in the debate. Lord, direct me. Something said to me, though by a strange man, Sir

[2] Diary.

J. Flood, shows that I have real weight in the House. 'Your opinion,' he said, 'has more weight than that of half the House besides.' This extravagant, but it showed what he thought the tendency of things. I have been reading some of the East Indian charter documents, which are immensely voluminous; and on Catholic Question. How difficult it is to attain to truth in these complicated cases; and therefore with what moderation should we hold our own opinions, and with what candour allow for those of others; whereas in both, the exact opposite prevails! Alas! Lord, guide and bless me. Blessed be God, they cannot be finally wrong in Thy sight who obey conscience, having taken due pains to inform themselves and judge rightly. 9th. House till half-past two. Grattan's resolutions in committee carried by a greater majority. Speaker spoke against Roman Catholics, though allowing still greater concessions—the honours of the bar, and army, and something imperfectly explained about the Roman Catholic hierarchy. I spoke. I was well received; indeed told by many who did not mean to compliment, that mine very good; and by one, the most useful speech yet made. But I did not feel at home, and rather lost the thread of my argument. I had a little used Feinagle's plan, but had not studied enough to be familiar with it, and preserve my presence of mind in such circumstances. I chiefly contended for Roman Catholics' admissibility into parliament now that the elective franchise is given to them." "Political power, sir," he said, "you have given them already,

it is vain therefore to attempt to stop where you now are; but the present is a golden opportunity in which you may accompany this concession with the necessary safeguards: for even if the consciences of the Roman Catholics should not be bound by the oath which they will take, where can *gentlemen* be found, who after swearing not to disturb or endanger the Established Church would dare to rise and propose any measure to its detriment?" "I can remember," he often said, "the recognition of Irish independence, and how those who had talked of it as almost treason made no attempt to oppose it; while if any objection was suggested, there was a general hush; and it was whispered, 'they have 40,000 volunteers in arms.' My experience of parliament and of the country convinces me that when some alarm arises in Ireland, a war, or an insurrection—every thing will be given up at once, as it then was, without those securities for ourselves, or that benefit for Ireland, which might now be provided."

Yet though he openly professed these grounds, it was easy to foresee that his conduct would offend many conscientious men. "Mr. Wilberforce's speech in the committee on the Catholic claims," wrote Dr. Buchanan at the time, "will produce some sensation among religious men in England. I am of opinion that he has judged rightly."[3] When he next visited his friends the Mores, he saw that a storm was lowering over him. "I was therefore on my guard; and when the subject was first

[3] Vid. Life of Dr. Buchanan, by Dr. Pearson, p. 387. edit. 1834.

broached, I looked very grave, and immediately assailed them with the declaration; 'How shocking it is that you who know so much of the misery which Popery has brought on Ireland, should advocate a system which perpetuates its galling yoke! Patty, who was especially warm upon the subject, and was ready to attack me, was confounded by this sudden thrust; we had no dispute, and my visit passed off as happily as ever."

But this great question was far from having an undivided hold upon his thoughts. Besides many other minor matters . . . " Feb. 11th. Long debate on Vice Chancellor project. Canning inimitable in wit and sarcasm. Bobus Smith spoke first time promisingly. How unfair the House to Stephen, and still more so to Weatherell, who also first time in House! The American war address. Public meetings for the next four days of this week, and the distressed manufacturers' committee . . ." besides these and such other matters, the great business of the session was pressing on his thoughts. He had perfectly resolved to fight to the very last the battle of Christianity in India, and the moment of the contest now drew near. Though he had been long making preparations, he had not satisfied himself. " I sadly fear," he says on the 16th of March, " that we have been too negligent about the grand question of communicating Christianity to our Indian fellow-subjects. We have heard of excellent Martyn's death in Persia, on his way to the Mediterranean homewards. It is a mysterious Pro-

vidence. Alas, when the interior is opened, the missionary and religious party in India are not so much at one, nor so free from human infirmity, as I had supposed. Oh did the world see into the hearts of religious professors, how much would it triumph over them! Yet they are better as well as worse than the world suspects. It confirms old Baxter, 'Good men neither so good, nor bad men often so bad, as the world supposes.'"

It was evident that the struggle would be arduous. The great mass of Anglo-Indians were convinced that the attempt to Christianize the East must infallibly cost us our dominion; and though they might reluctantly assent to the scanty ecclesiastical establishment[4] for the English residents in India, which government had been persuaded to propose, they were determined to abate none of their hostility to missionary efforts. They proposed therefore that the entire regulation of the subject should be left for the next twenty years to the East India Company, who had unequivocally shown what would be their rule of conduct. On this point then the contest was to turn. Upon the 22nd of March, "Lord Castlereagh opened upon the East India Company's charter—three hours. Then Robert Thornton. Sparring about East India religious interests. I, Stephen, and Thomas Thompson. Castlereagh not told by his colleagues what we had pressed, and bad work from it. We foretold petitions."

The temper of the House of Commons could

[4] One bishop and three archdeacons

25609

not be mistaken, and it was only by bringing forcibly to bear upon it the religious feeling of the country, that he could hope to carry through this most important measure. And now that he was in the strife, he set about the necessary steps with an energy and resolution which had never been exceeded even in the vigour of his early manhood, when he fought the Abolition battle. "The truth is," he tells Mr. Hey, "and a dreadful truth it is, that the opinions of nine-tenths, or at least of a vast majority, of the House of Commons would be against any motion which the friends of religion might make; but I trust it is very different in the body of our people; and petitions are to be promoted with a view to bring their sentiments and feelings to bear upon the opposite tenets and dispositions of the members of parliament. Surely there can be no doubt that all who are zealous in the cause of Christ would do their utmost to enlighten our East Indian fellow-subjects. I must have sent you a letter which I drew up last year for general circulation: I would send a copy but that it is out of print. It was composed too hastily, but it contained such arguments and motives as I think no Christian could resist."

Not a day was lost in calling to his aid the expressed religious feeling of the country. On the day following this first debate he wrote a multitude of letters to all his leading country correspondents, in the following strain.

TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

" My dear Friend,

Let me beg you to exert yourself in your circle for the great purpose of preventing the key of the door, through which alone any religious or moral light can obtain access into the East Indies, being committed for twenty years longer to the Court of Directors, who by their past conduct have proved their determination to keep that door close locked and barred against all that might disturb the profound moral darkness of those vast regions.

" Did you see a hasty letter signed A Christian, which I scribbled last year, when the question was expected to come on, and which was afterwards inserted (not by me) in the Christian Observer? But you do not need it, or any other composition, to inform or animate you—you have read Buchanan. You will agree with me, that now the Slave Trade is abolished, this is by far the greatest of our national sins; and it is prodigiously aggravated by its being affirmed confidently by Lord Teignmouth, Mr. Grant, &c. that prudent, and gradual, and successful endeavours to improve and Christianize our East Indian population, would strengthen our hold on that country, and render it more securely ours. But all this is to lead you to stir up a petition in Bristol, and any other place. The petitions for abolishing the Slave Trade were very general, and very useful; why not on this occasion also? I must break

off. Farewell, and believe me, (with kind remembrances to Patty and the sisterhood,)

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Mrs. Hannah More."

To another friend he writes—

"London, March 25, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

I wish I had an hour or two which I could give to writing to you, but I have scarce as many minutes. The subject on which I wish to open my mind to you is the pending renewal of the East India Company's charter, and the opportunity it offers of doing away that great national crime of committing the control of the only entrance for religious light and moral improvement into India to the Directors, who are decidedly adverse to every attempt that can be made to Christianize, or raise in the scale of being, our East Indian fellow-subjects.

"I beg you will attend to these last expressions; for great as is the importance of the subject in a religious point of view, it is only less important in that of humanity. It is a shocking idea that we should leave sixty millions of our fellow-subjects, nay of our tenants, (for we collect about seventeen millions sterling from the rent of their lands,) to remain in a state of barbarism and ignorance, the slaves of the most cruel and degrading superstition, lest they should not be so easily

governed by a small number of Europeans; though it is the opinion of many of the ablest East Indian statesmen that this doctrine is as false as it is wicked; and that by gradually and prudently proceeding to Christianize our East Indian population we should greatly add to the stability of our Oriental empire. Now I grieve to say, it is intended to commit, as before, to the Court of Directors the uncontrolled power of granting licences, without which no one shall be permitted to go to India; indeed to leave them the exclusive direction as to religious and moral concerns in all that regards our East Indian dominions. Mr. Stephen, I, and others, loudly exclaimed against the proposed system of barring out all moral and religious light from the East Indies, and declared that we were confident the friends of religion, morality, and humanity throughout the kingdom would petition on the subject. Now you I trust will make good our words. You petitioned in the case of the Slave Trade, and those petitions were eminently useful; so they would be now; and what is more, after having been talked of, their not coming would be highly injurious; so lose no time. The petitions should be from each place separately.

"To you I will confess I feel another consideration strongly. The Methodists and Dissenters will, I doubt not, petition; but let it not be said that they only take an interest in the happiness of mankind, and that the members of our Church are not as zealous when there is a real call for such exertions. I can-

not write to-day to Huddersfield, or Bradford, but do you exert yourself.

I remain ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

This application for petitions was received but coldly, from his friend's supposing that the appointment of a bishop and archdeacons implied, of course, that India was henceforward to be open to the missionary labours of the Church of England. To correct this misapprehension he soon wrote again—

"My dear Sir,

It is a grievous disappointment to me to be prevented writing to you to-day; but the post shall not depart without one line at least, to say that you must petition parliament if you would remove all obstacles out of the way of the clergy of the Established Church. Lord Castlereagh in his opening speech gave not the slightest intimation of having the East Indians in view in his bishop and archdeacons; they were solely for the Europeans. And even if there were three bishops, they would each, says Dr. Buchanan, have a diocese as large as Great Britain, and far more souls within them. And can you venture thus to add your sanction to the opinion which in direct terms (though a little varied in the phraseology)[5] has been expressed

[5] "What was said to me was, 'It may be shocking, Mr. W. to say so, but I do believe Hindooism is a better religion for them than Christianity would be.'"

to me in private, that our East Indian empire is safer under the protection of Brahma with all his obscenities and blood, than under that of God Almighty? And can you think it right to leave all those enormities to themselves? I am persuaded, my dear friend, you will hereafter regret your inactivity. Farewell—with kind remembrances to Mrs. ——

Believe me ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He was now "excessively busy stirring up petitions," feeling that it was "the greatest object which men ever pursued." "The spirit of petitioning scarcely spreads as one could wish." Yet the leaven was at work, and he soon adds, that "already Bristol, Hull, Glasgow, (excellent resolutions,) and Birmingham have spoken out." His own personal efforts meanwhile were incessant. Upon the 24th of March he went "early to town to Freemasons' Hall for committee of annual meeting of the African Institution. After business over, consulted about East India charter's religious bearing, and agreed on a public meeting for Monday, March 29th." Two days later he was again "off early, and after calling at Lord Liverpool's and Buckinghamshire's, to Seeley's. Meeting of committee on the religious bearing of the East India Company's charter. Long discussion. The Lords (Liverpool and Buckinghamshire) acceded to former concession, that the Board of Control should be authorized and required to grant licences to fit and proper persons to go to India as missionaries. House,

Romilly's Bill—foolishly did not speak, though ready. Kensington Gore late—stopping to discuss East India missions in council at Henry Thornton's." The next day, "the deputies on East India charter business, Gladstone (Liverpool), Macadam (Bristol), Schonswar and Broadley (Hull), R. Spooner (Birmingham), breakfasted" with him; and on the Monday following, March 29th, "an effective public meeting on the subject was held at the City of London Tavern."

On the next day began the examination of the witnesses before the House of Commons. "Mr. Hastings and Lord Teignmouth. The House exceedingly civil to Mr. Hastings; sufficiently so to Lord Teignmouth." This was now his daily business. "Writing almost all morning about East India charter—examinations, sharp work—extreme ignorance and bigotry. We examine daily from half-past four to near eight before other business." The object of the enemies of missions may be seen from the general tenor of their questions. "Would not," they inquired, "the appearance of bishops encourage a fear amongst the natives that force would ultimately be used to establish Christianity amongst them?" "Would it be consistent with the security of the British Empire in India, that missionaries should preach publicly that Mahomet is an impostor, or speak in opprobrious terms of the Brahmins and their religious rites?" In such an examination they had clearly a perilous advantage. Few or no witnesses could be produced to prove the safety of what had so rarely been attempted; whilst almost every

Anglo-Indian was ready to come forward and swell by his separate evidence the general cry of danger.

This made the issue of the question most uncertain: yet "government," he tells Mr. Hey, "is well disposed to us; but it is highly probable that they may be overborne by the sense of parliament, especially by that of the House of Commons, if the feelings of the public be not plainly expressed. So it was in 1793, when the resolutions had been agreed to by Mr. Dundas, but for want of any support from without were afterwards negatived. I should not much wonder if, unless the sense of the religious part of the public is expressed by petitions, both the ecclesiastical establishment for India, and all security for preventing the door from being barred against the admission of religious and moral light, should be altogether abandoned. Now this conduct it appears to me would be one of the most crying insults that ever called down the vengeance of Heaven. While we are going so far in favouring the Roman Catholics, shall Christianity be the only religion which is not to be tolerated in India?"

The examinations were evidently tending towards this result; and something must be attempted to prevent a fatal impression of the risk of all exertion being fixed upon the House. No time was to be lost; and as the examination by the Lords was to commence the following day, a meeting was summoned on Sunday, the 4th of April, at Henry Thornton's, Palace Yard, at three—"Stephen, Grant, Henry Thornton, Babington, and I, to discuss about the Lords' examin-

ation of witnesses on religious business—agreed that I should call to-morrow on Lord Grenville and Lord Wellesley, and settled one or two other points. Dined there, which I had not done on Sunday since I lived there." "5th. Called Lord Grenville's, and talked with him."

To Lord Wellesley he wrote upon the following day.

"(Private.) No. 1, Poets' Corner, Tuesday, 6, 1813.

"My dear Lord W.

Notwithstanding your obliging permission to me to break in upon you to-day, intimated to me last night by Mr. Wellesley, yet knowing that just now when your time and mind must be so fully occupied, it must naturally arise rather from your friendly disposition to comply with my request than be your own desire I have resolved not to intrude on your Lordship in person; but merely to send you a few lines, which cannot, like a conversation, draw on into a length that was unintended. That I may trespass on you as shortly as possible, I will confine myself to what requires immediate mention, and is indeed indispensable.

"I know not whether your Lordship has heard of the unreasonable clamour that has been raised by the Anglo-Indians in the House of Commons, against all, even the most prudent, attempts to convert the natives of India; and more especially against missionaries. Now let me hope, a hope which I share with, I am glad to say, a considerable number of men in the House of Commons, and with many more out of it,

that your Lordship will to-morrow use your just authority in putting to flight these vain fears. . . . The rather because the alarmists are enemies of the system which your Lordship certainly established, and which I trust you will confirm and revive, that I mean of diffusing useful knowledge of all sorts among the natives of India; and I confess for my own part that I have always held, and still retain, the opinion that education, the translation and diffusion of the Scriptures, and advancement in general knowledge, would be by far the most powerful agents in the great work of Christianizing the natives of India. Your weight thrown into the right scale will make it preponderate.

"I will only add that your Lordship can scarcely conceive (if I may judge of the House of Lords from the general condition of the members of the House of Commons) how ignorant your *Lordships* in general are likely to be respecting India, and therefore how little they are qualified to ask questions in the committee. When your Lordship can attend, I hope you will now and then look in, and there also prevent the examination from being rendered the excuse for condemning the population of India to ignorance and darkness, so long as they continue under British rule. I remember my assurance. I break off, assuring your Lordship that I am, my dear Lord W.

Your Lordship's very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Such applications as these to Lord Grenville and Lord Wellesley rank high amongst his varied services.

"You know enough of life," he tells Mrs. Hannah More, "to be aware that in parliamentary measures of importance, more is to be done out of the House than in it." In this peculiar line he occupied a post of usefulness which he could share with no one else. "The House agreed," he continues in his Diary, "that religion should be left out of the examination." In this resolution the Lords concurred a few days later, and upon the whole he esteemed it the best arrangement he could hope for. "Nine out of ten of the witnesses who will be called to give evidence are hostile to us. The House of Commons in general is disposed against us, and the newspapers are still more hostile to us than the House. Consequently it is far better for our cause, to rest it on the notorious facts of the case, and on the plain undeniable obligations which it involves, than on the evidence to be delivered at the bar. The public has access as well as we to the documents which are before the world, and I confidently hope that its respect for religion will counterbalance the neutralizing efforts of the Anglo-Indians."[6]

He was so convinced that his cause could only be carried by this influence, that although one Anglo-Indian witness had declared "the resolutions of the recent meeting in the city likely to excite a general ferment amongst the Hindoos, and favour an idea which (once obtained) would cause our expulsion from Bengal and India,"[7] he determined on appealing to

[6] To William Hey Esq. April 6.

[7] Evidence of W. Cowper Esq. before the House of Commons, March 31.

another. On the 13th, therefore, he was " early in the city, at the general meeting of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. Made the report of our deputation, and agreed to a petition to both Houses, for introducing Christianity in India." " When I woke," he says, " early the next morning, the idea of this business struck my mind so forcibly that I could not sleep, and got up fagged and feeble. To the House, where I wished to speak before the recess, but had no opportunity." As the best means however of supplying the defect which was occasioned by the omission of all evidence upon the subject of religion, he " moved for sundry papers to illustrate the moral character of the Hindoos, and the shocking practices prevalent there."[8]

The Easter week now for a short time intercepted the proceedings of the House of Commons, and he had long been engaged to spend it with his family in visiting Lord Gambier. " Our going put off once or twice already, but after a severe struggle I resolved to give it up entirely. I cannot spare the time now, when it is so much needed for East Indian religion and seeing people on it."[9] This was one great branch of his exertions. All had access to him, and he could enter every where. He was the link between the most dissimilar allies. Bishops and Baptists found in him a common term. " After breakfast Messrs. Gutteridge, Weymouth, and Shaw, three Baptist committee gentlemen, called on me about East India Baptist

[8] Diary, April 14. [9] Ib. April 21.

missionaries. Called on the Bishop of St. David's, and tried to stir him up. Called Earl ——'s, about East India religion business, found him full of prejudice and ignorance. How sad that so noble a mind as his should be rendered so indifferent to the happiness of our fellow-creatures! Talked to him some time. Got him to say he would read Lord Teignmouth's and Mr. Grant's pieces, and perhaps move for the production of the latter."[10] "Dean of Wells breakfasted with me, and met Andrew Fuller and Mr. Ivimey. Much talk of East India missionary affairs. Dined Lambeth—public day—little company—all engaged at grand public dinner for celebrating Sir Joshua Reynolds's fame; and the whole rooms of British Institution filled with his pictures. Archbishop very civil, but talked with me about Roman Catholic Question, which coming on. I tried to get him on East India business. As I came back, called for an hour at British Institution Rooms to see pictures. Fine assembly. Prince of Wales came up to me and accosted me very handsomely, and spoke a minute or two. Poor Sheridan took me up to his first wife's picture, and stood with me looking at it affectionately some time. All the lovers of the arts there."[11]

In the midst of this engrossing struggle, he was threatened with a serious attack of sickness, and for one day was very ill. The temper of his mind under this distressing interruption, is a striking proof of the degree in which the prayer with which he entered on the cause had graciously been answered. He had asked

[10] Diary, April 27. [11] Ib. May 8.

for simplicity of purpose, and his cheerfulness when laid aside, shows how pure had been the motives of his activity. "April 24th. A blank day; and really I could do nothing but think of God's goodness to me, in that even when I am ill, I suffer no pain. General Calvert told me of Col. —'s most painful operation, (twenty minutes long,) after great previous suffering undergoing immense fatigues, and unable to spare himself when suffering agonies. Oh! how much will men bear for a corruptible crown! Poor fellow! it is very affecting. May God touch his heart. How thankful ought I to be for having been spared it all! Here, as usual, God most merciful. My Saviour spares me." "A very fine day, after excessive rain," he continues two days later. "All the trees in leaf. Lilacs come out. Heard the nightingale a little—the first this year. My children around me, my wife in health, and all most beautiful and comfortable about me. What cause have I for thankfulness! Pretty well in health myself; and for two or three hours doing business in the garden. East India religion—Lord T.'s pamphlet, and thinking." [12]

The hidden safeguard of this happy simplicity of purpose, may be found in the record of his secret hours. "Secured," he says at his busiest time, "an hour for private devotions this morning and yesterday, and found the effects of it." [13] "This East Indian object," was his declaration when he undertook it, "is assuredly the greatest that ever interested the heart, or engaged the efforts of man. How wonderful that a private man

[12] Diary. [13] Ib.

should have such an influence on the temporal and eternal happiness of millions; literally, millions on millions yet unborn! O God, make me more earnest for Thy glory; and may I act more from real love and gratitude to my redeeming Lord." "Oh how does this little check of sickness," he continues after his recovery, "impress on me the duty of working while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work! Let me not take my estimate of myself from others who do not know me, but from my own self-knowledge and conscience. Oh what cause have I for contrition! What mispent time, what wasted talents, what means of grace (no one so many and so great) with how little profit; what self-indulgent habits; what softness, instead of the hardness of a good soldier of Christ! It may be shown in any improper want of self-denial. O Lord, may my faith and love be more active, bringing forth more the fruits of the Spirit."[14]

In this temper he resumed his work. "My mind," he says,[15] is "most deeply impressed with the importance of this East India subject. Lord, bless us; pardon our past lukewarmness and slothfulness, and make us more diligent for the time to come. I have not myself been duly attentive to this great subject." The next day he was "consulting about it with Grant and Stephen, and looking over the list of the House of Commons, to see whom we severally ought to speak to," and soon after he was "presenting East India petitions;" and after "moving for many East India papers, talked over the mode of proceeding in

[14] Journal. [15] Diary.

the question in cabinet council with Grant, Babington, Stephen, and Henry Thornton." Its conduct needed great address. All the feeling of the more religious classes of the nation must be brought effectively to bear, for political assistance he had none. Even Lord Grenville was "dry and cold upon the matter," and Mr. Tierney was one of his most obstinate opponents. Government indeed were disposed to make some favourable changes in the system; and the Resolutions he had recorded twenty years before were ground gained from which to work: but no ministry could carry such measures by force; least of all in the teeth of such an opposition as that of the whole Anglo-Indian body. They were therefore little likely to go to the utmost limits of their own inclinations, unless some counteracting force could be brought to bear upon them. It was the especial charge of Mr. Wilberforce to call up this force in the religious feeling of the country, and then to regulate and guide its action. A deputation from the Baptists was next to meet Lord Liverpool, and he determined to wait the issue of their application. It proved unsuccessful, and on the 21st of May he called his cabinet together for further consultations.

"Kensington Gore, May 2.

"My dear Macaulay,

We ought now without delay to settle our course as to the Mission business. The Baptists as we predicted have got nothing from Lord Liverpool but fair words, and the same condition in substance

which was before mentioned, except that, perhaps mistakingly, Andrew Fuller represents that the power is to be wholly with the Board of Control.

"The East India examination closes to day, so that no time should be lost.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The fresh application upon which they now decided had a more favourable issue. May 26th, he says, "Lord Buckinghamshire acceded to our terms;" and on the following day when he "visited the public offices, Lord Castlereagh agreed to Lord Buckinghamshire's and our arrangement for East India Christianizing Resolutions—far surpassing my expectations."[16] "Let me express my humiliation," he adds upon the following Sunday, "and my gratitude to God, for enabling us to agree with government as to the conditions for sending out missionaries, and in general as to improving, moralizing, and Christianizing India. I humbly hope that God has great designs in view for the East, and that they will be executed by Great Britain."[17]

But though the government had yielded to his wishes the battle was not over. The Resolutions which they had adopted, the House of Commons might reject; and in the House of Commons lay the strength of the Anglo-Indian party. The day of trial was approaching; upon the 22nd of June Lord Castlereagh moved the adoption of the 13th Resolu-

[16] Diary. [17] Journal.

tion. "The appearance of the House at the beginning of the evening was as bad as could be, but Lord Castlereagh opened the subject very discreetly and judiciously."[18] He referred the House to the Resolutions which at Mr. Wilberforce's motion had been adopted in 1793, and declared it to be impossible to take a lower tone upon this subject than had then been set. Cautiously proceeding upon this ground, he endeavoured to allay the exaggerated apprehensions which in some degree possessed the House. To this Sir Henry Montgomery endeavoured to reply, and he was followed by Mr. Douglass, who spoke shortly in favour of the Resolution. Then came Mr. Wilberforce. Two days previously Mr. "Stephen" had "urged him to prepare—good advice—but I know not how, I could not contrive to practise it." The morning of the 22nd had been given up to preparation, and he was now at his post, with his mind full of his subject. Never did he speak with greater power, or produce more impression. Twenty years before, he had appeared in the same place, the eloquent advocate of this same cause. He had beyond all expectation been spared to lead the onset in a new engagement; and he told the House that his silence during that long period was not because the subject had faded from his recollection, but because he had meanwhile been devoted to the payment of another debt to humanity which was even yet but imperfectly discharged. He went through the whole subject at length, proving the degraded character of the Hindoo superstition, and calmly reasoning out his own

[18] Diary.

conclusions; yet relieving the unavoidable prolixity of such a speech by occasional flashes of the brightest eloquence. "He who knows my heart," he said in closing his account of the Hindoo superstitions, "knows that I have not drawn this melancholy picture to exult over its blackness. It is with grief and shame I view it; mourning, sir, over my own country, which for fifty years and more has left so many millions of our fellow-creatures in this state of misery and vice. I am not bringing a bill of indictment against the Indian race—but I have lived long enough to learn 'that flatterers are not friends.' I am the true friend of this people, who am willing to allow their present degradation, that I may raise them to a higher level."

"It was late," he says, "when I got up; but D. G. I was enabled to speak for two hours (though curtailing from fear of being tedious,) and with great acceptance. I spoke better than of late. Bankes kindly said to me, I had got into my old vein, and though the matter was unpopular, yet admirably heard. Only a little afterwards from opponents, and we carried it, about 89 to 36, beyond all hope. I heard afterwards that many good men had been praying for us all night. Oh what cause for thankfulness; yet almost intoxicated with success." His own speech, and that of Lord Castlereagh, had largely contributed to this result; but the impression of nine hundred petitions, a number then wholly without precedent on such a subject, could not be mistaken. "Let no man think," was Mr. Wilberforce's warning to the House, "that the petitions which have loaded our table, have

been produced by a burst of momentary enthusiasm; or that the zeal of the petitioners will be soon expended. No, sir, it will be found to be steady as the light of heaven. While the sun and moon continue to shine in the firmament, so long will this object be pursued with unabated ardour until the great work be accomplished." The success of this great effort he communicated on the following day to Mrs. Wilberforce, who with his children was now in the country.

"House of Commons, Wednesday.

"Blessed be God we carried our question triumphantly about three, or later, this morning. As it happened, I do not believe we lost any thing from its not coming on till between ten and eleven, as we were spared many long speeches of our opponents, and I was able, thank God, to speak at length. I was quite surprised that my voice held out so well, as I must have spoken above two hours, and I do not find it worse this morning. I slept well and am as well as usual to-day."

But great as had been this triumph, the opponents of the measure were not disposed to yield without another struggle. During a day's absence from London, he writes to Mr. Samuel Smith.

"Barham Court, Friday night, June 25.

"My dear Friend,

Excuse my stating to you, in consequence of having heard from Mrs. Smith accidentally yesterday

that you and Abel were thinking of being at Wood Hall on Monday next . . . that we shall certainly have a strong conflict for the clause concerning the religious and moral improvement of our East Indian fellow-subjects; and Lord Castlereagh told me this morning that he thought the struggle would be on Monday; certainly I conceive, either on Monday or Tuesday. It is of extreme importance for us to carry our question with a high hand; but really it is not without cause that I am afraid of losing it altogether, because so many people are gone out of town, while the East Indians, our enemies, will assuredly stay.

"I will detain you no longer, indeed I am myself extremely pressed for time. I am come here on a melancholy occasion, and have just been attending to the grave the remains of my old friend, Lord Barham, having been desired so to do by his daughter. It is an affecting scene, but after all, it is only the vile body we commit to the grave, but the immortal spirit is not so confined, but I doubt not, is waiting in a happy intermediate state the full consummation of its felicity. May this, my dear friend, be our lot, and that of those whom we most love and value. Excuse this effusion, which is drawn forth by the scene I have been witnessing, and believe me, with kindest remembrances,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Do try to get us all the attendance you can on Monday."

The measure continued to advance in spite of every opposition. When direct resistance failed, its opponents endeavoured to defeat it by a side-wind, moving on the 16th of July, that the declaratory clauses of the Resolution should be omitted; thus whilst it gave the power of licensing the missionaries, making it imply that the privilege should never be exerted.

On this motion he again came forward, speaking almost as much at length, and full as ably, as before. One great argument of his opponents was grounded on the enthusiastic character which they imputed to the missionary body. India hitherto had seen no missionary who was a member of the English Church, and imputations could be cast more readily on "Anabaptists and fanatics." These attacks Mr. Wilberforce indignantly refuted, and well had the noble conduct of the band at Serampore deserved this vindication. "I do not know," he often said, "a finer instance of the moral sublime, than that a poor cobbler working in his stall should conceive the idea of converting the Hindoos to Christianity; yet such was Dr. Carey. Why Milton's planning his Paradise Lost in his old age and blindness was nothing to it. And then when he had gone to India, and was appointed by Lord Wellesley to a lucrative and honourable station in the college of Fort William, with equal nobleness of mind he made over all his salary (between £1000 and £1500 per annum) to the general objects of the mission. By the way, nothing ever gave me a more lively sense of the low

and mercenary standard of your men of honour, than the manifest effect produced upon the House of Commons by my stating this last circumstance. It seemed to be the only thing which moved them."[19] Dr. Carey had been especially attacked, and "a few days afterwards the member who had made this charge came to me, and asked me in a manner which in a noted duellist could not be mistaken, 'Pray, Mr. Wilberforce, do you know a Mr. Andrew Fuller, who has written to desire me to retract the statement which I made with reference to Dr. Carey?' 'Yes,' I answered with a smile, 'I know him perfectly, but depend upon it you will make nothing of him in your way; he is a respectable Baptist minister at Kettering.' In due time there came from India an authoritative contradiction of the slander. It was sent to me, and for two whole years did I take it in my pocket to the House of Commons to read it to the House whenever the author of the accusation should be present; but during that whole time he never once dared show himself in the House."[20]

Once more, upon the 12th of July, the Resolution was contested, but passed, in spite of Mr. Tierney's and the Anglo-Indian opposition. "The East India Bill passed, and the missionary, or rather the Christian, cause fought through, without division, to the last. We were often alarmed. Lord Castlereagh has managed it admirably—coolly and quietly. The petitions, of which a greater number than were ever known, have carried our question instrumentally,

[19] Con. Mem. [20] Ib.

the good providence of God really."[21] "To those who observe the signs of the times," he says to Mr. Hey, "the prospect is very encouraging. We were mercifully favoured by Providence in our parliamentary contest, and when I consider what was the state of the House of Commons twenty-five years ago, and how little it would then have borne with patience what it heard not only with patience but acceptance during the late discussions, I cannot but draw a favourable augury for the welfare of our country."

His own personal influence had been a powerful instrument in gaining this result. Never had he been able to bring forward in the House so openly his own religious principles; never had they been more respectfully received. "Last session," says a shrewd and even caustic critic,[22] whose sentiments were wholly different, "when the House had been tired night after night with discussing the endless questions relating to Indian policy, Mr. Wilberforce, with a just confidence in his powers, ventured to broach the hackneyed subject of Hindoo conversion. He spoke three hours, but nobody seemed fatigued: all indeed were pleased; some with the ingenious artifices of his manner, but most with the glowing language of his heart. Much as I differed from him in opinion, it was impossible not to be delighted with his eloquence; and though I wish most heartily that the Hindoos might be left to their own Trinity, yet I felt disposed to agree with him, that some good must arise to the human mind, by being engaged in a controversy which will exercise most of its faculties."

[21] Diary. [22] Barnes's Political Portraits.

His friends were looking with some anxiety to the effect which these great exertions might produce upon his weakly frame; but he was, he tells one of them, "certainly less exhausted at the end of the session, than at the close of the two or three preceding ones; and this, though I took a very active part in that greatest of all causes, for I really place it before the Abolition, in which blessed be God we gained the victory—that I mean of laying a ground for the communication to our Indian fellow-subjects of Christian light and moral improvement. The newspapers, as usual, gave a very short report of my speeches on that occasion, for twice I detained the House for near two hours, and, to your friendly ear I may tell it, with great acceptance. I have been strongly advised by several of our parliamentary coadjutors to publish the substance of my speeches,[23] and I have been, and am, putting on paper what I can recall; but what is indited in this way is always flat as well as imperfect. If I do publish, it will be for the purpose of recording the authorities and extracts from East India papers on which our measure was grounded. Our opponents being men of talent, and literature, and high connexions, will probably be able after a time to propagate the persuasion of our having availed ourselves of a temporary popular delusion, and therefore it is very desirable that there should be provided some antidote to this poison. The newspapers contain scarce any report of what I said on the occasion."

This too was far from having been his sole busi-

[23] They were subsequently published.

ness in the last session. Almost every day had brought its separate burden. A few extracts from his Diary, with which it was impossible to break the chain of facts connected with his leading business, will show how closely the interstices it left were packed with other matters.

"March 4th. Lock Hospital meeting. Then African Institution—Duke of Gloucester. Dined Henry Thornton's, and House. Cochrane Johnston's motion[24] put off, owing to gallery clearing by Lygon. 5th. Hudson and Smith, chemists, about Apothecaries' Bill. Then Burder and Osgood about latter's plan. Wrote a little. Town—Berbice meeting. Long talk with Lord —— about the governor's ill usage of us. Poor Lord —— very unreasonable and positive. How calm one can be, when acting with real disinterestedness! Yet curious, that I only arguing with him for his own interest and credit's sake. House—Cochrane Johnston's motion about Princess of Wales ended better than could have been expected. 17th. House—Whitbread's motion. Princess of Wales's business — eloquent speech, but no restraint on opinions or feelings. 19th. Castlereagh showed me what he had told me before, Sweden's abolition and Guadaloupe surrender—Euge. April 7th. Jews—London Tavern. First stone laying at Bethnall Green —Duke of Kent, Lord Erskine and Dundas, &c. Dinner afterwards. Grand day, and above £1000 collected. Erskine's animated speech. Way's fire. Frey's pathos. 10th. African Institution meeting.

[24] As to H. R. H. the Princess of Wales.

Lords Grenville, Lansdown, &c. about Registry Bill, and large meeting. 20th. Canning came to me about Roman Catholic Bill; with him to Mr. Ponsonby by Grattan's desire. Mr. Elliot there. Sir J. Newport, Romilly, and Sir Ar. Pigott, besides Ponsonby and Grattan. Talked over the matter. 28th. Breakfast with Canning. After talking over Roman Catholic business, to Hatchard's, to meet Blair, Pearson, John Villiers, &c. to revive the Lock Asylum. 29th. Forced to attend a meeting for Lock Asylum —right, but an hour and half expended. Called Grattan's, Lord Erskine's, and Donoughmore's. Lodgings—and House. Then with Henry Thornton to City of London Tavern—anniversary dinner for foreigners in distress, Duke of Gloucester in the chair —very civil. Near 200 people, and excellent object, but no foreign minister. Near £1000 collected after dinner.

"May 4th. Annual sermon, and meeting of Church Missionary Society for Africa and East. Dealtry. excellent sermon. Meeting afterwards, and spoke. Late to Asiatic Society, where took the chair—then House. 5th. British and Foreign Bible Society anniversary—full meeting—I spoke, and well received. Dined Lord Teignmouth's—Bishops of Salisbury, St. David's, Cloyne; and Norwich was to have been there, but prevented. 6th. Prayer Book and Homily Society—spoke, after a sermon, which could not attend causâ meeting at Gloucester House—Lord Grey, Lansdown, Stephen, Macaulay, Harrison, Vansittart, about Registry Bill. 7th. Jewish Meet-

ing anniversary—sermon yesterday, Randolph of Bath—I spoke. 12th. 'Archbishop of Cashel called morning—much talk with him about Ireland. 13th. Morning busy. Dined hastily Henry Thornton's. House on Catholic Question. Charles Grant spoke, beautiful but too elaborately. I, alas, too strong afterwards; as professing to act from higher principles, I ought to be more affectionate, and gentle, and meek."

This entry is a striking instance of the careful watch over his tongue which he so jealously maintained. Other members in the course of the debate declared that he had not spoken more severely than the occasion fully justified. But he judged by another standard, and in his next Sunday's meditation beautifully adds—"Having so little time I must not spend any in writing. Let me only record my own grief and shame; and all probably from private devotions having been contracted, and so God let me stumble. How much too strongly did I speak in the House of Commons, concerning Sir J. Hippisley! Alas, how little exhibiting the temper of the meek and lowly Jesus! Yet I humbly hope I have bewailed my sin with bitter contrition, and but for the weakness of my eyes could shed many tears. Lord, I flee to Thee for mercy, and do Thou guide and direct me. Yesterday's decision to have a committee of inquiry concerning the state and treatment in law and fact of the slaves and coloured people in our West India islands, will bring on me an immense load, if I undertake it; greater I fear than I can bear.

Yet, Lord, to Thee I look, for 'Thou delightest in mercy.' O soften, quicken, warm, and sanctify me."

"17th. Staid in town all night to consult whether to constitute parliamentary inquiry, as Lord Grenville had decided hastily on Saturday. 18th. Meeting of African Institution called. Sad blunder to call a board to negative such a committee's proceedings. Long talk there. Sad bother about being forced into a long inquiry of state of slaves, and coloured people in law and fact, for which unprepared; yet must not offend Lord Grenville—he behaved very handsomely. 19th. Busy all day about putting off the meeting of African Institution Committee to-morrow—various letters from Duke of Gloucester. 20th. Morning, Lord Grenville's. Duke of Gloucester's committee meeting—Grey, Romilly, Brougham, &c. agreed that too late this year, but settled to try next session and get evidence. 24th. To Babington's—East India consultation. House—Catholic Question—foolishly did not speak, though the very point on which most clear and full."

Amidst these occupations he found a moment to cheer the sick-room of a friend.

TO THE REV. JOHN VENN, CLAPHAM.

"Kensington Gore, May 26, 1813.

"My dear Friend,

I quite long to see you, yet I cannot contrive it. You know however how deeply I feel all in which you are concerned, and that I hear with corre-

sponding emotions, the different reports, which from week to week, and almost from day to day, have been made to me of your state of health. I believe I should go over to Clapham, but that a hurrying visit of a few minutes to you in your present state of serious indisposition is so little in unison with my feelings, as to be that from which I recoil with pain instead of contemplating it with pleasure. (I am now writing on Monday, May 31st.) You probably have heard that we are in the state which reminds us of the precarious tenure by which we hold our dearest earthly possessions, one of our children having had the Scarlettina, and it not yet being ascertained whether the others have caught the contagion. I myself should be the most ungrateful of men, if I were not sensible of the degree in which mercy and goodness have followed me all my days.

" My dear friend, may your supports and comforts be equal to the need you may have for them. Oh what would it be to suffer the pain, and sickness, and sorrows of life without these heavenly cordials, when even with them nature sometimes finds it hard work! May we meet, my dear friend, in that world where 'the former things shall have passed away.' Your own sufferings do not, I dare say, make you forget your friends, and among them, I entreat your remembrance at the throne of grace of myself and mine.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

" Rev. John Venn."

Mr. Venn's death shortly followed. "July 9th. Dear Venn's funeral—all his old friends and the London clergy. Afterwards African Institution. Duke very civil. Granville Sharpe died on Tuesday last. I agreed to attend his funeral, and by the Duke's suggestion the African Institution to do the same. 12th, 13th, 14th. House as usual, daily sitting—on the last I moved about Portuguese Slave Trade. On Friday last no House—I dined at Canning's, who had collected a large party of influential men. I asked to bring Bowdler, and Charles Grant, jun. To-night we adjourned; all business done till Tuesday, when to be prorogued."

Ever since the Abolition two important objects had occupied the protector of the negroes . . . the securing in our colonies its legitimate effects, and the interception of the trade of other nations. It was soon perceived that the first great object must be gained by a Registry of Slaves, which would prevent illicit importation, and so compel the planter to trust to the increase of his actual stock. In the last year an experimental Registry had been introduced at Trinidad, and it was with a view to a general measure to the same effect, that the full examination of the condition of the coloured population in our islands had been resolved on by the African Institution. This was now postponed until the following year. But the Foreign Slave Trade required incessant vigilance. Our maritime supremacy had for the time destroyed the Slave Trade of our enemies; and if we could by treaty secure the concert of our

friends, this scourge of Africa would be destroyed. Every new treaty therefore he carefully examined, and was ready to compel the government by friendly violence to insert the stipulations which this cause required. His intervention in the year before had succeeded in the case of Sweden, and his closing motion this session aimed at securing the same point with Portugal. On the faith of Lord Castlereagh's assurance that the matter should be pressed on Portugal, he withdrew his motion till the spring; and early in the holidays "Monsieur Funchal's projet" was sent him by the minister, who wished for his "confidential suggestions on the plan before their next interview."

A year before, he had "tried to impress the Comte with a sense of the danger of alienating all the religious part of our community from the cause of Portugal, by their continuing to carry on the Slave Trade, especially north of the Line;"[25] but he then found him obdurate, and the present scheme was most unsatisfactory. On the 28th of August he tells Mr. Stephen, "this day's post has brought me a long letter from Lord Castlereagh, who seems to be better disposed than I wish to the Comte de Funchal's projet. I own that I perhaps feel some prejudice against the man. Then I am persuaded that we should bring the matter to a much better issue by employing some particular individual to negociate on this business separately. Some few weeks ago I wrote to Lord Castlereagh, recommending him to propose to John Villiers to undertake the business. As I had no au-

[25] Diary, Sept. 11, 1812.

thority from Villiers to propose it, I wish this to be kept secret. He when in Portugal cultivated an acquaintance with the confessor of the Regent, and I know that he conceives that the string of religion would be most likely to vibrate. But to enable you to judge of the advantages of this appointment, I must state several particulars which I have not time to specify. I scarcely saw one motive for acceding to the Comte's proposals, until I read your suggestion that we should by it obtain the right of seizure to the north of Cape Palmas.

"But the grand question is, whether we can properly consent to purchase an entire exemption from the evils of the Slave Trade for one part of Africa, by leaving Portugal in the uncontrolled possession of another part? And I own, that on closing with that proposition, there is something so shocking in it in various points of view, that I scarcely know how to bring myself to consent to it; but if at all, I am sure that the part exempted should be all which used to be free from Portuguese visitation before we abolished, (there you see is a principle,) whereas their (Funchal's) projet would put them in possession of immense regions, from which they formerly scarcely brought any slaves whatever. I really cannot but value at a high rate, though the precise amount of the sum cannot be estimated, that increased and increasing abhorrence of the Slave Trade which pervades our whole empire; and I cannot but hope that in a few years we shall find the principle work, and possibly be able to prevail on other countries to concur in a

general Abolition. Now, by stipulating, though with a benevolent view, that we will not interfere with the Slave Trade within the limits to be conceded to the Portuguese, we shall preclude ourselves from any measures which should involve the Abolition of the Slave Trade in that part of Africa, at least by compulsory means. And I think you will agree with me in not expecting any good consequence from the internal duty on slaves imported into Brazil. We may let that hare sit, as the Dean says. Then surely the Comte has a pretty share of modest assurance in beginning with requiring as a preliminary that we should make full compensation, as a *matter of state*, (so Mr. Lucena sagaciously advises, not in the bold technical mode of legal adjudication,) for all the Portuguese slave ships seized by Captain Irby and others. I cannot now go further. The Mozambique and Cape article wholly inadmissible.

"On the whole I think we must except against the Comte's terms as audacious and even atrocious, in requiring such a preliminary to entering into a treaty at all; then instead of proposing to give us something considerable in addition to what was conceded by the tenth article of the treaty, actually calling on us to make over to them far more than even what they claimed in the large and loose terms which they used on that occasion. I recur to my old idea, of a separate treaty by a special negociation. I would however treat Lord Castlereagh with great civility; he behaves to us very handsomely; and we must remember that he himself was a high-duty Abolition man, and therefore

allow for his assigning more efficiency to that proceeding than you or I should do. I mention it to you lest you should forget it, and say any thing which might appear uncivil to him. If I could believe that the plan would ultimately terminate in Abolition, though after many years, I should view it with far more complacency. I own I cannot see that elysium at the end of any vista however long."

These objections to the project he laid before Lord Castlereagh in a letter, for the length of which he says "I really, my dear Lord, must beg your pardon; you have made me forget that I am addressing a Secretary of State, and I scribble as loosely as if I were writing to a private friend. It seemed the shortest way to discuss the question, as though it lay with me to accept or refuse the various conditions, but of course I do not forget that I am availing myself of your permission to suggest such remarks as occur to me on the project of the Comte."

He adds a few days later upon part of this proposal —"I hope that Comte de Funchal was not aware of the horrible consequences which would follow from suffering the slave ships to touch at the Cape, and of which there were of late some most shocking instances. Really, my dear Lord C., when I consider how closely we have been intertwining the interests of the Portuguese with our own, and how freely our blood and treasure have been lavished to preserve them in existence, I grow warmer if not more indignant than I ought to be at such treatment, and indeed at such conduct considered in itself—that with declara-

tions in their mouths that they consider the Slave Trade unjust and inhuman, and are aware also of the evils of a factitious population, they should be striving for the right of availing themselves of the protection of our flag, for the purpose of bringing on the natives of Africa miseries five times greater than any from which we have delivered them! I hope I need not assure your Lordship, after our long acquaintance, that I should very unwillingly resort to harsher means of carrying our point, if it could possibly be effected in good humour. But I do firmly believe that the people of this country might be brought to be willing to give up our Portuguese connexion altogether, rather than be rendered her passive instrument (a reproach on our understandings as well as on our principles) in enabling her to carry into execution a project so full of hypocrisy, wickedness, and cruelty."

He was now at Sandgate; having escaped into the country as soon after parliament had risen, as some "discussions" would allow, in which with "Brougham, William Smith, James Stephen, sen. and jun. Henry Thornton, and Macaulay," he had "decided that we should all do our best to get information for our case next session, but not send any one abroad." "I quite feel for you, my dear Stephen," he writes after his own escape, "who are still stoved up in London. I long to see you climbing our hills. Do come down if for two or three days only; an evening coach would bring you to our breakfast table, or a morning to our supper. Would not such an excursion do you good?

You talk of spirits; mine would sink from continued unmitigated stewage in the great city." But in spite of this affection for the country, he soon joined Mr. Stephen in Great Ormond Street to be present at a "meeting of the African Institution, to settle West Indian matters with Macaulay, Grant, and the interior council." [26]

His children now were much upon his mind. They had all gathered around him at Sandgate, and he watched over them as usual with the deepest interest. "I can scarcely," he wrote to a friend, with an enclosure which had been sent for his perusal, "conceive any earthly pleasure greater than that of receiving such a letter from a beloved son, who shows by his conduct that he writes the real sentiments and feelings of his heart. I am conscious of my own extremely inadequate powers in all that concerns the work of education, but I humbly trust that I can say with truth that the spiritual interests of my children are my first object, I mean that I wish to see them become real Christians, rather than great scholars, or eminent in any other way; and I earnestly pray to God for wisdom to direct me, and that His grace may be given in large measure to my children; resolving at the same time, since the Almighty acts by means, to consider thoroughly and after consideration to pursue the dictates of my judgment. I own I am rather sanguine in my hopes of the result, on ground of the Scripture promises. Join your prayers, my dear friend, to mine, and give me also from time

[26] Diary.

to time the benefits of your friendly counsel." In the same tone he tells Mrs. Wilberforce — "My best hopes for them rest on the declaration, that God hears and grants the prayers of His people through the merits and intercession of the Saviour. Oh let us press on to a higher proficiency in the Christian life as the surest expedient for their good. We do not—even those who hold the truths of Christianity correctly—we do not think enough or speak enough of the Saviour. I would gladly have Him continually before me. I find the sense of His presence produces a humble, calm, confiding dependence, making me 'walk softly.' To you I open all my heart. I feel very lonely without all of you, though nothing can be kinder than Stephen." Two days later he rejoined his family, going as far as Maidstone in the stage, and finding "much amusement in his fellow-travellers."

To Mr. Stephen he playfully describes his journey.

"Sandgate, Aug. 14, 1813.

"My dear Stephen,

After the scanty specimen which even the waiting to see me off obtained for you, of the powers of entertainment of one of my fellow-travellers, I scarcely need assure you that we were at no loss for conversation during the whole of the journey, though I ought not to say during the whole of it, for the fair one alluded to . . who by the way assured us that she was forty-five . . walking forward with two others of our fellow-travellers . . we were six in all till then . .

took a wrong turn on Wrotham Heath, and consequently we saw and heard no more of them. I cannot say the process was at all disagreeable to me. I could not well make out whether or not I was known, and I almost think I was not; they were all however very civil, and I am to send the Dairy-man's Daughter to one poor girl, the daughter of a Romney Marsh farmer who resides at Tenterden, and whom her mother was bringing home after a long stay in London, where she had a brain fever, of which, and her treatment in it, we had a detailed account, with some fears expressed by the mother, for which the light spirits of the girl really gave fair occasion, lest her spirits running away with her should produce a relapse.

"But I must not run on thus; it is latish on Saturday night, and I must hasten to a conclusion. I thank God, I found all the party here in good health. My dear S. I feel all your kindness to me, though I say little about it. I am however praying God to bless and preserve you.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"James Stephen Esq."

Here his time was spent in his usual summer occupations. "I get up about seven; then serious time and devotions for an hour; then dressing and hearing one of the children read to me for three-quarters of an hour—after breakfast, letters, and writing; dictating, &c. We dine together early, and then some of the

children read till we walk out, from about six till eight; then coming in I have an hour serious. Then family prayers, supper, and bed about eleven. I must try to see more of the children, and to obtain more time for study; hitherto I have done little but write letters."[27] Some of these are a good sample of the natural working of his mind amongst the common incidents of every-day life.

TO ROBERT OSBORNE ESQ. RECORDER OF HULL.

"Sandgate, Sept. 4, 1813.

"My dear Osborne,

When your friendly letter reached me I was at work upon a piece of business[28] I much wished to finish before I should begin to pay off my epistolary debts. But so much more slowly have I got on than I expected, and so many have been my interruptions, that it is not yet terminated. I can however in common decency no longer delay writing to you, and for the past I must throw myself on the mercy of the court. You have at least a penitent criminal to do with, habes confitentem reum.

"You make my mouth water by your lively description of rural pleasures and occupations. I speak seriously so far as the love of country is concerned, and in judgment and estimation I set a high value on the pursuits of a country life. I take it for granted you took the opportunity which I understand has been latterly afforded you by the Right Hon. President of the Board of Agriculture being in Yorkshire, to fur-

[27] Diary. [28] Dictating his Speeches on Christianizing India.

nish him with some fresh hints for perfecting the ferme ornée. What was said of himself by Falstaff in respect of wit, may be said of that same Baronet in respect of agriculture, (and half of it may be said in respect of wit too, I don't say which half,) and a high praise it is, that he not only superabounds with it himself, but he has been the cause of it in other men; for what other benefits may have resulted from the Board of Agriculture (Sir John's cher enfant) I will not take it upon me to pronounce, but I have myself seen collected in that small room several of the noblemen and gentlemen of the greatest landed properties in England, or rather in the British isles; all of them catching and cultivating an agricultural spirit, and going forth to spend in the employment of labourers, and I hope in the improvement of land, immense sums which might otherwise have been lavished on hounds and horses, or still more frivolously squandered on theatricals. I have been much struck with the improvement, which, judging from the Hull packet, appears to have taken place in Holderness, since we were children; I mean in the natives. If any judgment could be formed from their exterior, they were not then much addicted to reading and writing; whereas, I saw some time ago an account of a very clever paper which was read, together it was stated with others, at an agricultural meeting at Hedon—a place, by the way, which used to be fertile only in members of parliament, and the *dirty manure*, to carry on the figure, by which alone in such a soil that crop can be produced.

"But I am entering on a topic, on which there is much more to be said than I have now time for. I mean, when I begin to speak of the improvement of our country in intelligence, and I trust indeed in what is far more important, in religious and moral improvement—the best securities for national happiness, and the surest antidotes against some ingredients in our national cup, which are not of so salubrious a quality, or of such beneficial effects. Our political prospects have certainly brightened of late, and that considerably, but we have been so often disappointed in our foreign politics, that I scarcely dare indulge the hopes, which twenty years ago such a state of things might have excited.

"I had inquiries to make, but have left myself no time for making them—Paper I have in my drawer. But do remember I have few northern correspondents, and when you write, tell me what I cannot learn from newspapers, of Yorkshire men and things.

"With every friendly wish, I am, my dear Osborne,

Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His children remember the indignant feelings with which he witnessed the disgraceful capture of an English vessel, related in the following letter.

"Sandgate, Sept. 6, 1813.

"My dear Macaulay,

Captain Irby's impression of your letter is fundamentally erroneous; but his calm justification of

himself does high honour to his strength of mind. Few who had been led into the action by such a mistake of signals, would have achieved in it this conquest of their feelings.

"I am reminded by my figure of speech of mentioning to you an incident which, if you had been in London, I should have communicated to you by this afternoon's post. As it is this letter will not be sent off till to-morrow, and as I fear it can tend to no good, I will tell you the substance instead of the particulars. A merchant vessel lying just under the signal post in perfect security, because no indication was given of an enemy being at sea, was boarded without resistance and carried into Calais by a privateer, which had been in sight for full four hours and was known all the time to be an enemy, because the commanding officer at the signal post was absent partridge shooting. He would not have been so much to blame, but that he knew what all who reside hereabouts know, that when the wind blows strong from the south-west, the ships of war which protect this part of the Channel are forced to bear away for the next bay, between Dungeness and Beachy-Head. Really it is too bad to think of several of our poor fellows, or even if they were not English, (which we know not,) being carried to prison, &c. through the scandalous negligence of the officer, at the very time when he must have known he was bound to be peculiarly vigilant. It struck me immediately that the underwriters should be set on government, and had you been in town I should

certainly have named it to you. When the merchant vessel was boarded, a gentleman (who with two, or three, or four hundred others was on Folkstone Pier witnessing the whole) told me that there was such an indignant groan.—Also the officer who had charge of the guns knew it was an enemy, and had all ready for firing, (and if the merchant vessel had been alarmed, she certainly would have got away,) but would not fire, alleging from what passed on a former occasion, that if they fired without orders from the proper authority they would be reprimanded, if not worse. I am, my dear Macaulay,

Ever your sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The conclusion of this autumn was spent in paying several long-promised visits of duty and affection in the south and west of England. "How soon," he says plaintively on entering one house, where the voice which had often welcomed him was mute, "how soon does the gap close, which the withdrawing of a friend occasions! Yet —— was loved and valued."

A letter from Lord Lindsay on the 9th of September, told him of another and a sudden blow—Lord Muncaster was gone. "It seemed," he tells their mutual friend, Archdeacon Corbett, "almost an offence against our regard for each other and for the lamented friend whom we had lost, not to breathe sigh for sigh, if I may so express it, on that affecting subject. But as from a complaint in my eyes, I am obliged to write by another hand, I will leave it to your own mind to

suggest to you all I should utter in propriâ personâ.[99] If I had not heard from your co-executor at Muncaster, the affecting and characteristic language in which my legacy is left, I should have thought you wronged me in withholding it."

"I add these two bequests," were the words used by Lord Muncaster, "in way of legacies, one to my very early and much esteemed good friend Henry Duncombe Esq. of Copgrove in the county of York, and one to my truly valued and much regarded friend William Wilberforce Esq. member for the said county, of 100 guineas each; as a small proof and testimony of the very sincere friendship I felt towards them during the time I walked with them in this vale of tears and sorrowing."

Amongst the visits which had been the longest promised was one to Barley Wood, and when the time of paying it was almost come, he wrote to Hannah More—

"Oct. 6, 1813.

"My dear Friend,

I take up my pen to tell you that our visiting Stansted before we quarter ourselves on you will delay our arrival with you three or four days longer than I designed, or wished, or stated to you. But the fact is, and I had not adverted to it, that when at Mr. Way's, we shall be within fifteen or eighteen miles of the ——'s. She almost my daughter. Her father my first cousin, who lived thirteen years under my

[99] The Diary was intermitted at this time.

mother's roof throughout the period of my childhood, and who brought her down in his arms at three weeks old, to introduce her to me: and he dying a few weeks afterwards I always regarded her as under my special wing.

"Happily, blessed be God, I have been instrumental in her uniting herself for life to one of the very first Christians I know. Her friends, according to the usual error even of well-disposed people, had fallen into the absurdity of considering her having a good fortune as a reason for her not marrying a man whose income was not also large—instead of following the directly opposite, which is unquestionably the just reasoning, that there being money enough on one side, worth, and temper, and such other points, might be more entirely the objects to be required on the other. Well, these same excellent people thus married, I repeat it, through my aiding and comforting (as the lawyers phrase it,) have been inviting us to their house ever since their union; yet never did we, or I singly, set foot within it. Now if we could come into their neighbourhood and put up at the park and the chateau, and leave the parsonage unvisited, if ever the crime læsæ amicitiæ was committed, we should be chargeable with it in an eminent degree. But our visit to them will be short. I beg kindest remembrances to the sisterhood, and in haste am

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

It was seven years since he had seen Hannah More, except the single day that she had spent with him in the summer; and it was with no little pleasure that he again found himself, his wife and daughters, beneath the roof of the sisterhood. Death indeed had visited their dwelling, and taken one from the united band; but she who was gone had died in Christian hope, and they who yet survived lived on in Christian cheerfulness. It was still, as it ever had been, the favoured seat of intellectual and religious sunshine. "You must have been greatly entertained at Barley Wood," Mr. Wilberforce wrote a few weeks before to Mrs. Stephen,[30] "if your nerves were equal to the encounter, but you would miss the eldest sister. There was a place assigned to every one of the sisterhood, and not one of them could be spared without creating a void. I almost envied you the being housed, as I understood you were to be, with Mrs. Siddons."

Here he spent almost a week, and felt no want of Mrs. Siddons. The sisters were all life, and he was charmed with many of their guests. "18th. Dean Ryder came from Wells in the evening—truly pleasing and much talk with him. 19th. The Dean and I walked before breakfast, which late, because Lady Lilford and her family expected to it. Talked—walked—read to them Baxter's Life—(the change of view and feeling). 20th. After breakfast Miss Patty showed me her book of hand-writing of eminent men. Many of them written on purpose and very

[30] Aug. 26.

curious. Edward VI., Queen Mary, (William III.) Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke, and Atterbury. All the Admirals, General Wolfe, &c. All the politicians, Washington, Dr. Franklin, Prior, Priestley, Burke, Fox, Pitt. Sir Joshua Reynolds. A beautiful letter from Horsley. Voltaire, Rousseau, Blackstone. Bathurst and John Harford came, and his sweet wife. Lady S. and Mr. H. came over—he too talkative and forward, yet his success I hear is great. What a number of good people live at Clifton and Bristol! Met Dr. W. the true picture of a sensible, well informed and educated, polished, old, well beneficed, nobleman's and gentleman's house-frequenting, literary and chess playing divine—of the best sort (not adulatory). I hope beginning to be serious. On the 22nd of October we left our kind friends." And by the 12th of the next month he was again in his winter quarters in the neighbourhood of London.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DECEMBER 1813 TO DECEMBER 1814.

Successes of the Allies—Christmas with his children—Lascars—German sufferers—Society—Madame de Stael—Buonaparte abdicates—Foreign Slave Trade—Lord Castlereagh at Paris—Letter to Emperor Alexander—French Treaty—Interview with Emperor—Amendment to the Address—National schools—Blucher—Cossacks—Czartoriski—Bishop Middleton—Letter to Talleyrand—To his son—Congress of Vienna—Correspondence with Duke of Wellington—Sismondi—Humboldt—Madame de Stael—Prospects of French Abolition—His private life at Sandgate—Return to London—Slave Trade abolished by Napoleon.

PARLIAMENT had been sitting nearly for a fortnight when Mr. Wilberforce returned to town; but no important questions had required his presence. Little more was done in the early part of the session than to follow with votes of thanks the successful progress of our army. "The war" had "begun well after the armistice, Austria having joined the Allies, and Buonaparte being crippled in both flanks, and apparently centre too."[1] Every step of the Allies was now watched most anxiously. "We saw last night flashes of cannon on the French coast, which we fear is for

[1] Diary, Sept. 20.

some victory. Buonaparte however would make the most of a small one. St. Sebastian taken, but by a terrible loss of men—in all to us and our Allies 5000 killed and wounded."[2]

The triumphs of this scourge of God were over. The allied armies all through this campaign steadily advanced upon the retreating Emperor, and upon the 25th of November the guns of the Tower were "firing at nine and again at four o'clock, for news of Lord Wellington's storming the French lines near the Pyrences. Also prodigious success of the Allies. Dresden taken, with 16,000 French. The glorious news from Holland better than all the rest."[3]

But though little was at this time doing in the House, his time was fully occupied. His children had gathered round him for the Christmas holydays, and he was giving his usual attention to them. "Chatting with them all the evening, and reading Miss Edgeworth's tales to them. I extremely wish to attend to them, but I sadly feel my incompetence to discharge the parental office." These feelings were quickened at this time by his seeing "in the newspapers that poor C. N. was killed. Alas! alas! I fear it will go hard with my good old friend his father. I used, I fear too sanguinely, to hope that God would hear the prayers of all who called on Him for their children. Yet surely good old N. prayed, and so did she, for poor Charles. Oh what a lesson to us to give all diligence with our children as well as with ourselves, and also to live closely with Him,

[2] Diary, Sept. [3] Diary.

that our interest with Him may be greater!" "I have received by return of post a most Christian letter from my old friend. The degree in which the good man is filled with a sense of his own sins makes him dwell less on his son's situation, and for his own defilement the fountain stands open. S.'s interesting account of poor C. N.—yet while eulogizing him, said he had no benevolence or kindly feelings. S. thinks that he was over-dosed with religion, and that of an offensive kind, while young. It is an awful instance, and well deserves the study of all parents; they should labour to render religion as congenial as possible. It is worth inquiring what the failure was in poor N.'s case, if any; which it seems difficult not to suppose considering all his sons to be such as they are."

Many other matters soon claimed a large share of his attention. Amongst the most troublesome was a long inquiry into charges brought by a governor of Sierra Leone against his friend Zachary Macaulay. "Poor Macaulay, after all his sufferings, labours, and disinterestedness for Africa, in reality put on his defence; and having the mortification of seeing even well-disposed people (for A—— is a worthy man, though prejudiced) jealous, and taking up with idle and malignant tales against him—what a lesson to us not to set our heart on worldly favour, even that of good men! Yet he will come pure out of the fire." Soon afterwards he gave another "morning to Sierra Leone, examining M——, whose inaccuracy would be laughable in contrast with Macaulay's cor-

rectness, if the inquiry had not cost him so much time to hunt amongst old papers. Poor A—— made his speech—how weak! His prejudice and error manifestly originating from the N——s. How sad to see so fair and so kind a man so misled! The Quakers are humane and active, but often obstinate, and occasionally absurd from not knowing enough of the world, of the judgments likely to be formed by other men, and the impressions to be made on them." When the inquiry was completed he went "to the Sierra Leone Committee to settle the Report. Brougham had drawn it up, and though, as he said, he had softened things in order to let down A—— and his friends easily, yet all favourable and honourable to Macaulay, and condemning N——." "It will, I hope, keep us all together, if so it is from Macaulay's Christian spirit, which truly honourable to him. Had he pressed for a more triumphant, and really therefore more just vindication, A—— and the N——s would have left us, and a mischievous rent have been made."

His full London season was now begun, and he was often "worried by many morning callers upon business." "Breakfasters" too abounded; while all his rooms were occupied by various friends. "Dr. Buchanan came to stay with us a little. Dear Bowdler also an inmate—much pleasing talk." Yet however he was occupied, he could not decline any pressing work of mercy. On the 3rd of January, "we were," he says, "a very large party at breakfast, Mr. Cardale and several others, first time about the Lascars and

Chinese brought over in our East India ships; and shall we not provide for them, or for their return?" In this work he called a few days later for Mr. Stephen's aid—

(Private.)

"My dear Stephen,

I have but a few moments for writing, but if you will be at liberty I will call on you between two and three o'clock, that we may proceed together, if you like to join me, to the East India House. At all events I wish to let you know something of a case which has been some time before me. But consider yourself as having promised not to divulge it, without my permission. Mr. Cardale some few days ago brought hither three or four Lascars. It appears that these people, about 1500 in number, are quartered in Ratcliffe Highway, the East India Company paying ten shillings per head weekly for their board and lodging. Some neighbours reported that the poor creatures were very hardly treated, and there had been much private inquiry, and long and numerous discussions, before I was apprized of it.

"Attention was kept more awake through some benevolent and intelligent young men employing their leisure in teaching them English, and in learning from them Bengalee, Hindoostanee, and Chinese. I was expecting almost daily to go into the city to inquire, when Mr. Cardale four or five days ago wrote me word, that the superintendents of these poor creatures had learned that some of them had been complaining of their treatment, and that they had therefore re-

solved to send the grumblers off by the first ship. Matters were in this state when about three quarters of an hour ago, surrounded by ten or twelve visitors of various sorts and sizes, I received the enclosed letter, which you will concur with me in thinking requires immediate attention. I mean therefore to proceed to the India House immediately after an interview with Lord Melville which is appointed for half-past one o'clock. Will you meet me at the India House?

I am ever yours, in extreme haste,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The singleness of spirit in which he undertook such causes, may be seen in the alacrity with which he resigned the leading part to others. "Grant," he tells Mr. Babington, "has been asking me to spend some time with him to-morrow, to settle a plan for the protection, and I hope instruction, of the Lascars: will you help him to form it? It is a business just suited to you, and it would be aiding the accomplishment of a great act of humanity as well as of friendship to Charles Grant, jun. who is to bring the business before the House of Commons. I believe you know some particulars about these people, to which I may add their willingness and capacity to receive instruction. Mrs. Babington will laugh and say, I am at my old trade of bringing you into the harness."

To put others forward was indeed his "old trade." He had set on foot about this time another plan, to which he found himself unable to attend as fully as

he wished, and went down therefore to the committee whom he had set to work, to "advise their putting it into the hands of some other M. P. who could attend to it, and carry it through. It soon appeared that — had already made this very application to two M. P.s. There could not," he continues with beautiful simplicity, "be better men for a business of this kind; and therefore though it was not handsome in him towards me who had first named the matter to him, I appeared unconscious of it, and truly declared I would help them in any way I could, and that I was glad it was in such hands. It is a great part of true wisdom and Christian conduct to set others on good scents instead of following them oneself." In the same spirit he now acted; "I have been busying myself about the Lascars, but from thinking that my being prominent, would excite a mischievous prejudice in Directors' minds by associating the business with the subject of Christianizing India, I have kept and will keep in the back ground as much as I can without injuring the cause. It is great practical wisdom to set proper men at work on proper business, and for this end it is so useful and beneficial both for this world and the next, to form connexions qualified by talents, principles, dispositions, and habits, to be active and useful."[4]

He was at this time busy in another charitable work, in which he was thrust forward into an unwilling prominence. The destitution on the continent, for which he had last year done much to

[4] Diary, Feb. 9.

obtain relief, was greatly aggravated by the ravages of the last campaign; and he was now most anxious to obtain substantial aid for the German sufferers. On the 27th of January, he was "off early to the City of London Tavern to the meeting for relieving the distressed Germans. I moved the first resolution. The Duke of Sussex prevented attending by the asthma. But a poor meeting as to our respectable people. Henry Thornton in the chair."

Not satisfied with this attempt, he was soon afterwards "trying to effect a meeting in the West End of the town." "I have written to see the Archbishop of Canterbury, and called on Lord Sidmouth to get him to solicit the Prince Regent for a grant. The Archbishop consented to attend, as did several others whom he personally solicited; and the 25th of March was named for the meeting; though he found some leading noblemen "refuse to attend—all party feeling—sad work. How disgraceful and unprincipled, though they are not aware of it!"[5] When he reached Freemason's Hall, upon the 25th, he found "the Archbishop already there, and the Duke of York soon after. All in confusion from one 'contrāry' Lord, who however I am told is a benevolent, kind-intentioned man. Our fault was, not at once telling the Archbishop our plan of proceedings; who to move and who to second, &c.; but finding all alive and in motion when I arrived, and fearful of appearing desirous of showing off, I made no preparation, and consequently all confusion. The Duke of York in the chair. The

[5] Diary, March 24.

two archbishops and many bishops, but only Lord Harrowby and Chancellor of the Exchequer (from my last night's letter). All the resolutions moved and passed in a lump, and no speaking; till afterwards the Archbishop said a few words; then the Duke of Sussex, who has behaved nobly about ceding the chair and then coming. He received me most kindly when I called on him about it. Though he had been led to consider himself as chairman, he gave it up most liberally, and said he trusted he should show he was actuated by a better principle than vanity. Sir James Mackintosh too has acted nobly in coming and being ready to speak, but we could not manage it either for him or for Charles Grant. I was at length called forward to second Lord Buckinghamshire's motion of thanks to the Duke of York, and most kindly received. —— burst into tears at seeing me so applauded. Madame de Stael there.[6] Oh while this should humble me in the dust from the consciousness how little I deserve their praises, how assiduous should it make me to use my influence wisely! How graciously God's good providence favours me! I had scarcely thought at all before, and had no plan of speech, yet for a few sentences went on very well. My merciful Saviour has never yet forsaken me. O God, what thanks do I owe Thee!"[7] "The archbishops and bishops," he tells

[6] She has described this meeting in her Considerations sur la Revolution Française, "L'homme le plus aimé, et le plus consideré de toute l'Angleterre, M. Wilberforce, put à peine se faire entendre, tant les applaudissements couvraient sa voix."

[7] Diary.

Hannah More, "have come forward for the first time in my recollection, to succour the poor German sufferers. But how sad, not one opposition Lord, and the only Commoner Mackintosh, and very few noblemen of any kind; none but Lord Harrowby, Gambier, Kenyon, Buckinghamshire, and Walsingham. How little do people consider the account they will have to give of their money, influence, &c.!"

Besides these calls of charity and business, society had many claims upon him, and often occupied his time, though he watched more narrowly than ever over his motives and conduct when he entered into it. This spring affords some striking illustrations of his principles in this particular. "When attending," on the 8th of February, "a meeting of the African Institution, Sir S. Romilly told me aloud that Madame de Stael assured him she wished more to be acquainted with me than with any other person. The Duke of Gloucester made me by her express desire fix a day for meeting her at dinner, chez lui—Saturday sennight. This is mere vanity, and perhaps curiosity; and I felt my vanity a little rising too on the occasion. Oh how full are we of this degrading passion; and how diligently should we counteract it by calling up the ideas of what degrades us, and of the judgment we should form of others in whom we saw the same temper of mind! Thus we learn to abhor ourselves, and to sit in judgment on ourselves as on others. Lord, enable me thus to scrutinize and condemn myself more and more. She told the Duke of Gloucester that I did not think how really religious she was.

I must read her L'Allemagne, in order not to excite her prejudices. It will also enable me better to distinguish between her religion and the true, in conversing with others. Feb. 9th. Off to —— to poor Lady E. who has been very ill, and was, I heard, in bad spirits, and wrote to me that she wished for a little religious conversation. Dined and talked all the evening with her—poor thing, how much to be pitied about her son and grandchild! She has been most tryingly circumstanced, but seems to have suffered much from not being more decided in opinions or practice. 10th. Breakfasted as had dined alone, but talked some time in the morning with her. Then to town, and City of London Tavern—Refuge for the Destitute anniversary. Came back with Lord S. who mentioned his deceased wife in sweet terms—he had often found her at prayer, and her eyes wet with tears, when he went to her room.

"Castlereagh negociating at Chatillon with Allies' ministers and Caulincourt the Duke of Vicenza. I cannot help believing that the ministers are not calling forth a spirit sufficiently strong, by not taking any clear line about the Bourbons. 11th. Lord Erskine asked me to dine to-day to meet T.; but there would be no good talk before them, so dined at home. 12th. Dined at Weyland's to meet R. the lawyer, editor of the British Review—a very different man from what I expected—a great stout fellow—but I forget; how could he otherwise get through the labour he undergoes, educating children, a profession, editorship, and writing nearly all sometimes? 18th.

The French have probably cut off a few thousands, detached parts of the allied army, but Buonaparte retires. Reports of differences in the Cabinet. Three per cents once lately as high as 72, probably might reach 75 if peace. 19th. Dined Duke of Gloucester's to meet Madame de Stael, at her desire—Madame, her son and daughter, Duke, two aides-du-camp, Vansittart, Lord Erskine, poet Rogers, and others. Madame de Stael quite like her book, though less hopeful—complimenting me highly on Abolition—'All Europe,' &c. But I must not spend time in writing this. She asked me, and I could not well refuse, to dine with her on Friday to meet Lord Harrowby and Mackintosh, and poet Rogers on Tuesday sennight. This would lead to an endless round of dinners, but it neither suits my mind or body; when I dine late, the previous hours are worth little, and the rest of the evening goes to society. I greatly doubt about the doing any good by dinings-out. By going out now and then in the evening, when I have dined early, and am fresher and brisker, I should be better fitted to adorn religion and seize occasions of doing good: now I am often sleepy, and not having duly cultivated the religious principle by private devotions, it is weak, and I grow worldly and useless. I may fairly assign weak health, and dine early, and so get more hours for business."

"I must secure more time for private devotion, for self-examination, for meditation, for keeping the heart, and even doing the duties of life, or the most pressing claims will carry it, not the strongest. I

have been living far too publicly for me—'Notus magis omnibus.' Oh may it not be 'ignotus moritur sibi.' Lord, help me. The shortening of private devotions starves the soul, it grows lean and faint. This must not be. Oh how sad, that after trying to lead a Christian life for twenty-eight years, I should be at all staggered by worldly company—Madame de Stael, &c. I will not however, please God, enter and be drawn into that magic circle into which they would tempt me. See my Diary for a new plan."[8] "Lord, forgive my past unprofitableness, and enable me to bring forth more fruit to Thy glory. It is reasonable that now, when I find a manifest decline in some of my faculties, I should require more study, and thus only it is to be secured: unless I adopt some such plan, my giving up part of my parliamentary attendance will only be to exchange it for social intercourse with the irreligious, which dissipates and injures the mind; not, as it ought to be, to barter it for family cares, and culture and more study and preparation for public business.[9]

"22nd. Wrote to Madame de Stael with my books, for which she had almost asked. Then off for Kensington. Called on Duke of Sussex by his desire, and sat near an hour talking about German subscription, Roman Catholic Question, war, &c. He talking of *his* friends, meaning Grenville, &c.—said he suspected the Emperor would play us false—Swartzenburg's debts—seems to have a good library. Dined at home, and —— being with me, I foolishly staid

[8] Journal, Feb. 20. [9] Diary, Feb. 20.

reading loosely Burke, Cicero, &c. instead of writing letters, and getting to other business."

"23rd. Breakfast, Mr. Barnett about the poor. Letters. Wrote to Madame de Stael and poet Rogers, to excuse myself from dining with them. It does not seem the line in which I can now glorify God. Dinner quiet, and letters afterwards.

"24th. To K.'s to dinner, where S. and others. I had heard just before from Macaulay of his having at a party strongly condemned my book and religion, and that G. who is just beginning to be earnest, was much disgusted. Alas! it is a pity; yet I wish I had as much love of the Saviour as they have.

"25th. Colonel Burgess to dinner about lessening oaths—a pious man, and great labourer in the British and Foreign Bible Society cause. Was to go to Madame de Stael's to meet Harrowby and Mackintosh. I had refused to dine, meaning to go in the evening, but on reflection no good to be done, and it would lead to precedents; so though the carriage was ordered I staid at home—considered it with prayer. Will call to-morrow morning. No real good to be done but by general effect; and for that I must be better, not being well to-day. Also how can I refuse my old friends, Harrowby, &c. if I go to these new invitations?

"27th, Sunday. Having a cold I staid at home and read Baxter. Much pleased, and I hope edified. I know not when I spent two or three hours so quietly. I must redeem more time I see. How lean in spirit I become without full allowance of time

for private devotions! I must be careful to be 'watching unto prayer.'

"March 4th. Introduced —— to Lady S.; thinking it would strengthen L.'s hands and give credit to her religion to have them thus acquainted with persons of rank and fashion. Much unpleasant doubting what I ought to do about Madame de Stael. Lady S. tells me that there has been much discussion whether I should go, and wagers laid; but Madame de Stael said she was sure I should come, because I had said I would. What care this shows we should take, because we shall be more closely watched, more strictly judged! I must do away the effect of this in her mind, that she may not think I conceive I may speak conventional falsehoods, the very doctrine and crime of the world, which so resents what it calls lies and the imputation of them.

"10th. I have consented to dine with Madame de Stael; I could not well do otherwise. Bowdler said much to persuade me. Let me try to speak plainly though tenderly to her. 18th. Dined with Madame de Stael—her son and daughter, and two other foreigners, Lord Harrowby, Lord and Lady Lansdown, Sir James Mackintosh. Lord and Lady Granville Leveson were to have dined, but Lady Spencer died that morning. She asked me to name the party. A cheerful, pleasant dinner.—She talking of the final cause of creation—not utility but beauty—did not like Paley—wrote about Rousseau at fifteen, and thought differently at fifty. Evening, assembly, but I came away at half-past eleven. A brilliant

assembly of rank and talent." "The whole scene," was his next day's reflection, "was intoxicating even to me. The fever arising from it is not yet gone off, (half-past 8, A: M.) though opposed by the most serious motives and considerations both last night and this morning. How dangerous then must such scenes (literally of dissipation, dissipating the spirits, the mind, and for a time almost the judgment) be to young people in the hey-day of youth, and life, and spirits! How unfit for those who are to watch unto prayer, to walk soberly, to be sober-minded! Something in my own case may be fairly ascribed to natural high spirits, and I fear, alas! much to vanity, and a good deal to my being unaccustomed to such scenes; yet after allowing for these weaknesses and peculiarities, must not the sobriety of my age, my principles, my guard, (prayer preceding my entering into the enchanted ground,) be fairly considered as abating the effect, so much as that I may be a fair average sample of the effect of such scenes on young people in general of agreeable manners, and at all popular ways and characters? I am sure I durst not often venture into these scenes. Then the seasoning is so high that it would render all quiet domestic pleasures insipid. Even poor Paley used to say, (though I hope jokingly,) 'Who ever talks to his wife?' This showed even in him the danger of being fascinated by social gaiety. O Lord, enable me to view last night's scene in its true colours, and shapes, and essences. I have not time to trace out the draught. May I remember that they and I are accountable,

dying creatures, soon to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and be asked whether we avoided temptation, and endeavoured to preserve a frame of spirit suited to those who had to work out their salvation with fear and trembling."[10]

"I am now engaged to many parties, yet I must not go on thus. It unfits my mind for private devotions, and makes me too late, steals me from my children, and even from my business, which from my weak health I must do by contrivance. O Lord, guide me; let me not do any thing contrary to the liberal and social spirit of Thy religion, but let me have wisdom to see what is really required from me, and resolution to perform it. My own soul should doubtless be my first object, and combined with it, my children, . . how much better might I serve them if I cultivated a closer connexion with God! . . my business, and doing good to others. I am clear it is right for me to withdraw from the gay and irreligious, though brilliant, society of Madame de Stael and others. I am I hope thankful to God that I am not given up to these pleasures. O let me labour that I may not be merely gratifying an indolent spirit by staying away. Let me cultivate a spiritual mind, that if any be really in earnest I may then approximate and show them that I can feel; and oh may God touch their hearts also. How surely is every one who is in earnest useful to others! Poor Lord G.! Let me talk with him, and guard him against the deception of being satisfied with the world's religion. Indeed he knows

[10] Diary, March 19.

too much for that. But O may I above all pray and strive for a larger measure of softening, warming, quickening grace. Amen." [11]

This calm and self-denying judgment of himself is not a little striking in one, whose past labours and long-settled character would have exempted him in the eyes of the most scrupulous from the necessity of such rules of conduct. Nor was it that any touch of age had damped the exuberance of his younger spirits; and that he withdrew morosely from scenes in which he could not as of old give and experience pleasure. "Mr. Wilberforce," was Madame de Stael's declaration to Sir James Mackintosh, "is the best converser I have met with in this country. I have always heard that he was the most religious, but I now find that he is the wittiest man in England." His social qualities are about this very time thus described by his friend Mr. Harford. "The first time I met Mr. Wilberforce was at the house of his friend, Mr. Henry Thornton. I had heard him speak in the morning, in a crowded meeting, at the anniversary of a public charity, when elevated sentiments and touching appeals, rendered doubly impressive by the fine tones of his musical voice, had deeply affected the feelings of the auditory. There was a dinner party at Mr. Thornton's, and several of the guests were among the particular friends of Mr. Wilberforce. Mr. Thornton before we sat down to table expressed a hope that he would join us in a few minutes. We had not been long seated when he entered the room

[11] Journal, March 13.

with a smiling, animated countenance, and a lively vivacity of movement and manner; exchanging as he advanced kind salutations with his friends, whose faces were lighted up with peculiar pleasure at his presence. From my earliest youth I had been taught to reverence the name of Wilberforce, so that my delight was great to find myself in his company. His manner and address throughout the afternoon were marked by kindness and vivacity, and his style of conversation was brilliant and easy.

"Those who never saw him till within eight or ten years of his decease when his figure had become a good deal bent, and his head depressed upon his chest by the weight of years acting on an extremely delicate frame, cannot easily form a just idea of him at the period to which I now refer. Some tendency to these infirmities, it is true, was already apparent, but the elasticity and spring of his movements, the comparative erectness of his figure, and the glow on his cheek, presented a strong contrast to the decrepitude which gradually stole upon him in his declining years. His frame was at all times extremely spare, and seemed to indicate that the ethereal inhabitant within was burdened with as little as possible of corporeal encumbrances; but from this attenuated frame proceeded a voice of uncommon compass and richness, whose varying and impressive tones, even in common conversation, bespoke the powers of the orator. His eyes, though small, and singularly set, beamed with the expression of acute intelligence, and of comprehension quick as lightning, blended with that of

cordial kindness and warmth of heart. A peculiar sweetness and playfulness marked his whole manner. There was not a single handsome feature—there was scarcely one that was not in itself plain; but the mingled emanations of imagination and intellect, of benevolence and vivacity, diffused over his countenance a sort of sunny radiance, which irresistibly acted as a powerful magnet on the hearts of all who approached him. At this time, and till within a very few years of his death, he wore powder; and his dress and appearance were those of a complete gentleman of the old school." [12]

All this time the Slave Trade had not been forgotten; and preparations were in progress for introducing the General Registration Bill, when greater prospects opened upon the protectors of the negro race. The progress of the allied armies promised soon to give peace to Europe. The negociations indeed at Chatillon were long protracted, and after one or two slight successes, "Buonaparte" was "swaggering again." "Almost all the nation" were "now against making peace with Buonaparte." [13] No peace they thought could be secure, and complete success seemed now within their reach. The negociation itself was unpopular. "Morritt showed me a letter from Marshal Beresford, having entered Bourdeaux. All Gascony wild against Buonaparte—calling themselves English—showing the church and castle built by Edward the Black Prince, and saying, 'It was yours, why do you not retake it?' We are in a very

[12] Memoranda, by J. S. Harford Esq. [13] Diary, March 6.

distressing situation from being in treaty with Buonaparte. All deprecating peace except the opposition, who are silent?"[14] Yet four days later "Lord Erskine told" him "that" he was "a strong Bourbonist, and Lord Grenville too. That Buonaparte is quite the creature of our manufacture, as much as any Birmingham buckle or button."[15]

All fear of such a peace soon vanished. Buonaparte rejected the proposals made to him, and on the 4th of April "Vansittart stated that the negociation was broken off, and that all the Allies are together, and have been and are of one common sentiment." The drama was hastening to its close. "How wonderful," he says upon the 9th, "are the events of the last few days! After hearing that Buonaparte had dashed into the rear of the Allies it seemed doubtful what would happen; when suddenly we heard on Tuesday that they were marching on to Paris. Then we hoped the best; but how little expected that today, Saturday, we should hear of Buonaparte's accepting the Emperor of Russia's offer, renouncing the throne and agreeing to retire to Elba!" "Have you good authority for believing that Toussaint perished in Elba? If so, and if Buonaparte himself selected it, he is harder-hearted than Shakespeare would have rendered his greatest villains."[16] "Yesterday evening I saw in the newspapers that the Senate had declared against him; and, headed by Talleyrand, had pronounced his dynasty at an end. How nobly the Em-

[14] March 23. [15] Diary, March 28.
[16] Letter to J. Stephen Esq.

peror Alexander has behaved! I am delighted that Paris is spared. Oh for the general Abolition of the Slave Trade." On the same day he writes to Mrs. Hannah More—

"London, April 9.

"My dear Friend,

So the dynasty of Buonaparte has ceased to reign, as friend Talleyrand informs us. This hath God done. How can I but wish that my poor old friend Pitt were still alive to witness this catastrophe of the twenty-five years' drama (since 1789)? But I recognise (what indeed I must say I have often stated to be my expectation) the Scriptural principle of Divine conduct, in selecting for the instruments of its favours not the most admired of human agents, but those I doubt not from whom (Perceval only excepted) the voice of prayer has been most frequently poured forth for the success both of our counsels and arms—'Them that honour me,' &c. The present ministry also has clearly been more favourable than most others to true religion. Farewell. Kindest remembrances.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The burst of joy which overspread the nation was proportionate to the length and danger of the struggle, and the completeness of its ultimate success. London was soon full of the triumphant conquerors, and for once the whole land rejoiced with them. Not courts

and cities only, but even the ancient rest of the Universities was disturbed by the universal exultations.

Ergo omnis longo solvit se Teucria luctu.

"Il faut attendre que tout le *bustle* soit passé," writes Dumourier, with whom he was corresponding on the subject of the Slave Trade, "pour voir des hommes sages et parler raison." But a deeper tone of feeling filled the mind of the protector of the negro race. On the 11th of April he says, "Buonaparte abdicated, and to have six million livres in Elba. My wife and children went out to see the illuminations and staid till late. Harrison[17] came over to me, and I stated to him my ideas, that I must write a letter to the Emperor Alexander. I wrote to Lords Liverpool and Bathurst, stating that Alexander's mind was doubtless in full unison with all grand and humane proposals. How wonderful are the events which have taken place! I told Liverpool frankly that we should look to government alone for not restoring any slave colony without Abolition condition. There they had no option. Lord Liverpool wrote me a very pleasing answer, desiring a copy of my Abolition Letter for Castlereagh."

To the congratulations of his friend William Hey upon the continental triumph he replies a few days later.

"Near London, April, 1814.

"My dear Sir,

If I had not 'extremely occupied' to plead in my defence, I should feel quite uncomfortable at hav-

[17] Secretary to the African Institution.

ing been, I had almost said churlishly, irresponsive to your animated call. And I own I have been condemning myself for not echoing back the songs of grateful acknowledgment. Never surely was the hand of the Almighty more strikingly manifested. Had not Buonaparte been absolutely infatuated, he never would have broken off the conferences at Chatillon. I like your verses much, and can imagine my old friend joining in chorus and singing with all his might. I have been thinking how to convey them to the hands of the Regent, but have not yet devised a way. For I have been for some time, till two days ago, a close prisoner from an attack on the lungs, or rather trachea; for which a blister and silence were prescribed to me by Dr. Baillie. I thank God I am much recovered, indeed nearly well again. I am just now extremely occupied, both mind and thoughts, with considering about, and taking measures for, effecting a convention among the great powers for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. It would be indeed a glorious termination of the hurricane. But do not talk publicly of this.

"I am so pressed for time that I can only further say, farewell, and that I am, with kind remembrances, my dear sir,

Your sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

It appeared to be a most favourable moment for this great attempt. "Since Great Britain abolished

the Slave Trade," as Mr. Stephen sketched out the actual state of things in an eloquent appeal to Louis, "she and France have not ceased to be at war, and the United States of America have during this period renounced the dreadful Trade. France and Holland have wholly lost it by the war. Sweden has disclaimed and pledged herself never to engage in it. Denmark has abolished it by a voluntary and perpetual edict. Portugal has solemnly acknowledged its injustice and cruelty; has greatly retrenched its local limits in Africa, and engaged by treaty with Great Britain, for its gradual abolition. The irresistible influence of the colonists of Brazil under present circumstances is perhaps the only impediment to the immediate performance of that engagement. The delicate situation of the Spanish government, as to its colonial possessions, may furnish a similar apology to that power for having delayed the same reformation. France therefore will have her part to take under circumstances perfectly new and peculiar to herself; she has no establishments to break up, and no existing commercial interests to surrender. The war has suspended her share of that traffic; she can only resume it. Shall it be said that France by her sordid example stood between the repentance of Europe and the deliverance of Africa?"

"It would be too shocking," Mr. Wilberforce says to Mr. Gisborne, "to restore to Europe the blessings of peace with professions of our reverence for the principles of justice and humanity, and at the same moment

to be creating, for so it would really be doing wherever the Slave Trade is extinct, this traffic in the persons of our fellow-creatures. We are much occupied with the grand object of prevailing on all the great European powers to agree to a convention for the general Abolition of the Slave Trade. Oh may God turn the hearts of these men! What a great and blessed close would it be of the twenty-two years' drama!" To Mr. Stephen he continues,[18] "Besides preparing for our future parliamentary measures, we have to consider and act with a view to the general Abolition. I wrote both to Lord Liverpool and Bathurst, enforcing on them the importance of bringing the proposition before Alexander's mind while it should be in an impressible state; while he should be feeling the complacency which the Almighty has annexed to the performance of generous actions, though some time may elapse before the detail of the measures required for carrying the proposition into execution can be discussed. It happens quite providentially that the only powers which are much interested in carrying the Slave Trade on, are Spain and Portugal, and they may surely be compelled into assent." These "parliamentary measures" aimed at the projected Registry which was at this time in hand; but so important did it seem to seize the present favourable moment for obtaining a general Abolition of the Trade, that it was soon resolved to lay aside for a season this domestic question. His first doubts upon this subject are thrown out to Mr. Babington.

[18] Letter to James Stephen Esq. April 11.

"Kensington Gore, April 19.

"My dear Babington,

If I am pretty well I shall attend at Gloucester House at twelve to-morrow—the West Indian Committee. I have been careful of this attack on my lungs, because I considered my voice as my working tool, and requiring therefore peculiar attention. The complaint has stuck by me, but it is in itself very trifling.

"I am deeply humbled under a sense of my own inefficiency, that I have not done more or better with a view to our present circumstances in relation to the Slave Trade. What a consolation under such circumstances is the idea of our merciful Saviour, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; while at the same time, this consciousness does not lull into inaction, but stimulates into sober and calm energy according to our powers.

"Do give your mind to the consideration of whether we should now push the Register Bill. Is it not a strong argument contra, *just now*, that if it should be opposed powerfully, much more if successfully, (and as our opponents could fight us by urging the necessity of inquiry, &c. they might succeed,) we might alarm the West Indians, and cause them to be clamorous and united, &c.; and that the different European governments, hearing the clamour, might form a false judgment of their and our several degrees of strength and popularity; and apprehend that, by assenting to our proposal of abolishing, they

would only gratify one party by rendering themselves unpopular with another? Surely the Abolition by the European powers should now be so much our grand object, that we ought not to incur the risk of injuring it by benefiting another, or gaining a little time for it, though in its season it will also deserve our utmost care. This will be the chief subject of our consultation to-morrow—I mean, whether to proceed with the Register this year or not. Farewell.

Ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Within a week the question was decided according to his wish at a "meeting of the African Institution at the Duke of Gloucester's—Lords Grey, and Grenville, and Lansdown, Macaulay, H. Thornton, W. Smith, James Stephen, Brougham, and Mackintosh." It was "agreed to give up the Register Bill for the present, and to push for a convention for the general Abolition—to present an address to the Crown, to negociate with the foreign powers, and to forward the measure by all means."[19] So earnest was he in the cause, that he was ready to condemn himself for not "having foreseen this conjuncture, and been prepared with works in all the modern languages against the Slave Trade."[20]

His own special part was to prepare his letter to the Emperor. "I am about to correspond with a real live emperor," he concludes a letter to Mr. Gisborne, "not merely such a sort of Birmingham em-

[19] Diary. [20] Ib. April 23.

peror as Buonaparte; so admire my condescension, which can bestow all this penmanship upon you." At this he set to work directly, though he found it difficult to rescue from his other occupations the time which it required. "An incessant succession of inferior concerns," he complains, "prevents my doing this really important business. I cannot yet please myself at all; and I have written to beg Bowdler to try his hand at a head and tail piece at least. Use your influence with him. I cannot keep myself from interruptions."[21] "Though I have as little conception," replied Mr. Bowdler, "how to address an emperor as if he were an inhabitant of the moon, I half had intended to put what occurred to me upon paper, in order that after seeing the failures of other pens, you might be better satisfied with your own. Depend upon it, whatever styles you employ as contributory, if you consult the wise they will insist on your ultimately adopting your own."[22]

This in the end he did, though little able to secure the leisure he desired. "I find myself," he says, "stupid and slow, and not able to move at all to my liking in composition. My mind must be filled and warmed, then I can pour along pretty well. I am like a horse which cannot get into a gallop till it has some space in which to come to its speed; the incessant interruption of little things obstructs my progress. I have been sadly bothered about the French translation, and forced to write so many letters that I could not get to my

[21] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq.
[22] Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. April 18.

work till very late."[23] Now however he kept close to it; "writing the foul copy" of his letter as he walked "in the garden;" and even giving to it some of that time which he most reluctantly conceded to any worldly care. "I stay at home to-day, (Sunday, April 17th,) on account of my cold, and I am about, after a short prayer for the Divine blessing, to set to work on my letter to the Emperor. I do it as in God's sight. Surely this occupation is pleasing to Him who says, Mercy is better than sacrifice. I can truly say in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, that I do not engage in it from inclination, for the contrary is the truth, but because it is a business which presses greatly in time, and which tends eminently to the glory of God, and the present and eternal happiness of men."[24] Yet on the following Sunday he says, "I will not quit the peculiar duties of the day for my Abolition labours. Though last Sunday I set about them with a real desire to please God, yet it did not answer; my mind felt a weight on it, a constraint which impeded the free and unfettered movements of the imagination or intellect; and I am sure that this last week I might have saved for that work four times as much time as I assigned to it on Sunday. Therefore though knowing that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, yet let me in faith give up this day to religious exercises, to strengthening the impression of invisible and divine things by the worship of God, meditation, and reading. I trust He will bless me during the week, and enable me to make up what might seem lost."

[23] Diary, April 23.

[24] Journal, Sunday, April 17.

He adds, "how sad it is that Louis the Eighteenth should set out for France on this day, and thereby both himself spend Sunday in travelling, and keep numbers of others from public worship! O pardon them this great sin, and let it not draw down Thy just judgments on them that they transgress Thy known and acknowledged laws at the very moment in which they are experiencing Thy mercies. What ingratitude, and without temptation! What folly! Is this the Roman Catholic religion? Is it philosophical enlargement of mind, alas! Is it a remnant of the principles, the prevalence of which drove them thence? Then how sad that none should have the courage to tell them! O shame! shame! Forgive, O Lord, and punish not our land for this ingratitude and cowardice. Alas!" he adds, "how this last week has rolled away, and scarce any thing is done!"[25] Yet it was not long before his work was completed, and it was soon followed by a letter to Talleyrand, the anticipated head of the French administration, to whom, he says, "I was personally known when I was in France thirty years ago with Mr. Pitt."

The address to the Emperor enters at considerable length into the history of the Slave Trade, and contains a most striking picture of its chief abominations. "And now, sire," he concludes the letter, "it may be proper for me to state, that the individual who with all humility has presumed to implore a hearing, is a private gentleman who from his earliest manhood to the period much beyond the middle term of life,

[25] Journal, April 21.

which he has now attained, has had the honour of a seat in the British parliament, having represented for near thirty years by much the largest county in the United Kingdom, an honour which declining health and domestic concerns compelled him two years ago voluntarily to relinquish; who, though the personal friend of the late Mr. Pitt from their being fellow-students at Cambridge till the period of his death, always was, and still is, the devoted adherent of no political party; and who having in the year 1788 brought forward a proposition for abolishing the African Slave Trade, as inconsistent alike with the laws of God and the happiness of man, after a struggle of near twenty years, in which he had the honour of being associated with coadjutors far abler and more efficient than himself . . some of them, both of the dead and the living, the brightest ornaments that ever distinguished the British senate . . had at last, in 1807, the satisfaction of seeing that measure sanctioned by the authority of the imperial parliament.

" But though the guilt and infamy of this wicked traffic no longer attaches to Great Britain, yet the Trade itself still exists; and it is in the hope, sire, of leading you to employ your powerful influence in suppressing it, that in the name of religion, justice, and humanity, I implore your notice.

" To the Divine blessing I now consign these pages. May that Almighty Being, whose I trust you are, and whom you serve, who has raised you up to be the chief agent in delivering the European continent

from the bonds in which, by a mysterious Providence, it had been so long held, render you the honoured instrument of accomplishing in Africa also His purposes of mercy. May you live, sire, to witness the blessed result of your beneficence, in the prevalence throughout those benighted regions of Christian light, and moral improvement, and social comfort; and to hear her sable children, when, in the language of Scripture, 'they spread forth their hands unto God,' call down not temporal only but everlasting blessings on the head of Alexander Emperor of the Russias, as the greatest of their earthly benefactors."

In spite of all his hopes it was too soon evident that the French would not willingly abolish. "Their merchants," was the report which he received, "are intent on gain any how. Gregoire and all the old amis-des-noirs men are in exceedingly bad odour. No respectable persons will have any thing to do with them."[26] Although therefore he touched upon the subject in congratulating his early friend, the Archbishop of Rheims, whom he hoped to find open to such an appeal, at the moment when he said "nous sommes tiré du fond de l'abîme, nous rentrons dans notre patrie, dont nous sommes exilés depuis un quart de siècle;"[27] though he began to work through La Fayette, the Baron Humboldt, and every other channel, yet he saw that every thing depended on the firmness of the British government. Great Britain held the most important colonies of France, and she might refuse to restore them on any other

[26] Diary, May 15. [27] To W. Wilberforce Esq. April 22.

terms than instant Abolition. Although therefore he felt at one time "doubtful whether he should not go to Paris on the Abolition errand,"[28] yet he thought it better to remain, and move an address[29] to the Regent, entreating him to take some steps for effecting a general Abolition. Towards the close of the month "Vansittart came up" to him "at the House, and told me he was sorry I had not gone to Paris—that our question their chief difficulty. This looks as if government had not been stout in retaining the islands. On reflection it occurred to me that my strength lies in the House of Commons; that therefore though more eclat in going over, it would not be politic. I can conceive Lord C. would like my going, and would push me on with them, but surely on the whole it is better not. It is advisable however to send some well-informed person to give them intelligence, but who cannot be regarded as a political man, and have the affair shifted upon him. I rejoice that I wrote so strongly to Lord Liverpool advising him to settle a Convention for Abolition, but stating that for keeping the islands, unless they were to agree to import no slaves into them, we looked to our government alone."[30]

The mission to Paris was immediately undertaken by Mr. Macaulay, whose zeal, sagacity, and accuracy of information made him a most suitable agent for a cause in which he had been one of the principal labourers since his return from Sierra Leone in 1798. He started on the evening of Saturday the 21st, bearing various letters of introduction from Mr.

[28] Diary, April 20. [29] May 2. [30] Diary, May 19.

Wilberforce, which he had accompanied with the following note.

"Saturday, six o'clock.

"My dear Macaulay,

I think you should seal up my *gay* book for the Prince of Benevento before it is presented. I mention that you are the bearer of it and of my letter. I have been forced to scribble in sad haste. You will say to Lord Castlereagh what I forgot to mention, that WE Abolitionists all understand that not a colony is to be surrendered but on the condition that no African slaves are to be imported into it. I only add, but with all due solemnity, may God bless you. I can truly say I wish I could have taken the load from your shoulders to my own, but for reasons which probably Babington stated to you, my going would have done harm. Once more, God bless you, and, as the Orientals write, what shall I say more—but that I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The West India business was not his only subject of disquiet in the pending treaty. "I slept but ill last night," he says, "from uneasiness about the approaching Norway question. I spoke at last, and was forced to support the good faith of the country, though the idea of starving the Norwegians into compliance is shocking."[31] "I wish that my argument about Norway had been inserted in the newspapers;

[31] Diary, May 12.

it was acknowledged even by our opponents, I may say so to you, to be the most convincing. But Messrs. the reporters, had a better excuse than usual, in its being so late an hour."[32] "The truth is, Norway would not starve. She would submit if she knew she must. We saved her from being conquered by prevailing on the Crown Prince to postpone the acquisition of Norway till after the European war, which was then doubtful, by promising afterwards to aid him with our naval force. Well, with his aid we gain by God's blessing all our successes, and then oposition ask us to refuse him the promised aid—an aid which it was not unjust to promise. We being at war with Norway as part of Denmark, had a right to buy an ally by promising that if by our common arms an enemy's country was conquered, she should possess it. Yet the idea of starving these poor people is shocking. Oh how hideous are war's features when closely viewed! How thankful should we be to be spared such sufferings!"[33]

Amidst these causes of discomfort he was cheered by grateful news from India. "A pleasing account of Slave Trading punished in Ceylon,[34] and Java, and about to be suppressed on the Coromandel coast. Oh how thankful should I be for having been enabled to devote myself to this cause; and though France now basely cleaves to it, we shall by degrees, I hope, stimulate her into wiping away the foul blot which she

[32] Letter to Colonel Creyke, May 14. [33] Diary, May 13.

[34] He had supplied information on this subject to Sir Alexander Johnston the Chief Justice of Ceylon, and to Sir Stamford Raffles, Governor of Java.

is now willingly taking to herself. Detestable baseness!"[35]

He was now about to move an address to bind the Crown, by an express engagement, to restore no colony to France without the stipulation he desired. But like a prudent leader he abandoned the design on finding in a private conference with some of the Cabinet, that he should be opposed by government.[36] While there was any hope of a favourable close to the negociation, it was of the utmost moment to prevent such a division. But when, contrary to all expectation, the treaty of peace was found to restore to France all her colonies upon a vague promise that the Slave Trade should cease in five years, "We shall all," he says to Mr. Stephen, "be shortly I suppose in opposition, from Macaulay's returning re infectâ." "My spirits are quite lowered by it. Alas! alas! How can we hope that in five years' time, with so many additional motives to cling to the Trade, she will give it up? Yet let us do what we can, and trust to God's blessing on our labours; I by no means despair. Macaulay says, that when he dined with Malouet, minister for the colonies, Malouet said, Did we English mean to *bind* all the world? Macaulay should have reparteed. His first words to Macaulay showed he confounded Abolition with Emancipation.[37] I grow more and more shocked with the arrangement. Let all who would not be partakers of

[35] Diary, June 2.

[36] Diary, May 24.

[37] "I set him right," says Mr. Macaulay, "in this particular, and said that we confined our views entirely to the former."—To W. Wilberforce Esq. June 1.

the guilt, protest against it. Surely God will visit for these things." [38]

"I staved off yesterday," (Sunday,) his Diary continues, "the thoughts of the Abolition arrangements, but to-day they rushed on me, and grieved me deeply." [39] On that evening, when Lord Castlereagh, on his return from Paris, entered the House of Commons, he was received with loud and enthusiastic cheers. "The only voice which remained mute amidst the fervent burst of joy, was that of Mr. Wilberforce. No heart beat more highly than his with patriotic emotions, but this feeling was mastered by another which forbad its utterance." [40] The acclamations therefore were no sooner hushed, amidst which Lord Castlereagh laid on the table a copy of the treaty, than he "opened upon him." [41] "I can assure my noble friend," he exclaimed, [42] "that if I have not been able to concur in the salutations with which he has been welcomed on his return, it is not from any want of personal cordiality, but because seeing him come up to the House bearing the French treaty, and calling to mind the arrangements made in it respecting the Slave Trade, I cannot but conceive that I behold in his hand the death-warrant of a multitude of innocent victims, men, women, and children, whom I had fondly indulged the hope of having myself rescued from destruction. It is not, however, to give vent to the

[38] Diary, June 4. [39] Diary, June 6.

[40] Memoranda, by J. S. Harford Esq. [41] Diary.

[42] "I wrote a sketch of what I had said, the first time for twenty years or more, and sent it to the Morning Chronicle."—Diary.

feelings of an overloaded mind that I have now risen, for in truth my feelings are far too deeply seated for me to be thus eased of them, but I rise chiefly to notice two particulars to which I entreat my noble friend's immediate attention." One of them was the preventing a five years' revival of the Dutch Slave Trade, the other the imposing restrictions upon that of the French. "When I consider," he continued, "the miseries that we are now about to renew, is it possible to regard them without the deepest emotions of sorrow? Still as all this was known to my noble friend, I will not suppose that he could lightly or without what appeared to him the most imperious and almost irresistible necessity set his hand to such a treaty. For my own part indeed I frankly declare no considerations could have induced me to consent to it." "My noble friend must allow for my extreme regret, if when at length, after a laborious contention of so many years, I had seemed to myself in some degree in possession of the great object of my life,—if then, when the cup is at my lips, it is rudely dashed from them, for a term of years at least, if not for ever."

His acquiescence in this article of the treaty, was in vain entreated by ministers on both sides of the water. On the 13th of June, he had "a long talk with Lord Liverpool by appointment. He stated that the French government intimated the strongest opposition to the Abolition, and that we could only at the utmost have stipulated for it as to those colonies which we were to surrender, while it would go on unlimitedly as to St. Domingo. That their colonies

were not in a fit or prepared state for the change. That they, however, would take but five years to prepare for it, though we took fifteen or eighteen. That ultimately, the universal Abolition would be effected by the influence of France with Spain and Portugal; whereas otherwise, all adverse. That the French took the matter up in a high tone, and resented our dictating to them, believing that all our plea of having abolished ourselves, or urging them to abolish, on grounds of religion, justice, and humanity, were all moonshine—mere hypocrisy."[43] The same shallow fallacies, mixed artfully with personal flattery, formed the burden of Talleyrand's reply.[44] Its flattery was wasted on him, and to its arguments he soon replied at length. "France," he tells the Prince,[45] "needed no time to prepare its colonies for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, since they had in fact been going on without it for twenty years. Great Britain had a vast capital engaged in it, several thousand tons of shipping, &c. On the contrary, France has not now the poor excuse to plead that the Abolition would demand sacrifices which she cannot afford to make. Not one solitary vessel, not a single seaman, not a livre of capital is now employed in the Slave Trade. Further, since the trade in man has been for many years practically discontinued, you cannot plead for it the excuse of established habits or inveterate prejudices; you, in truth, would begin a new Slave Trade." "I had a letter acknowledging mine,

[43] Diary, June 13.
[44] Vid. Correspondence of W. Wilberforce Esq.
[45] Letter to Talleyrand.

from the Prince of Benevento—all flummery, shrewdly throwing in our having been so leisurely in abolishing as a fair plea for their five years."[46] His reception of the Prince's flattery convinced Mr. Stephen, "that you are praise-proof." "If I am," he replied, "it is only when I have time to call up my antidotes."

Amidst these various disappointments, he was not a little "thankful to hear that the Emperor Alexander charged himself with the Abolition in a Congress. He wishes to see me."[47] On the evening of the 10th of June he "received a note summoning" him for one o'clock upon the morrow. "Sunday, 12th. Got up by half-past six, that I might pray to God for a blessing on my interview. Lock—from which, to the Emperor. In his waiting-room were several of his nobles — Prince Czartoriski, Prince of Oldenburgh, and others. At length the Emperor who was absent at Messe (Greek Church) returned, with the Princess of Russia, (Oldenburgh,) and I was summoned up-stairs, and soon after into the inner room to the Emperor. He took me by the hand, very cordially, and assured me that he was much interested for my object, and very glad to see me. On my stating my fear that the French would not in fact abolish at the time settled, he replied heartily, 'We must make them;' and then correcting himself, 'we must keep them to it.' I asked leave, before I left him, to write to him, conceiving that any thing I should say would be driven out of his mind by the incessant bustle of his situation. He frankly assented,

[46] Diary, June 7. [47] Ib. June 11.

and told me he should be glad to hear from me, and was obliged to me. He shook hands with me cordially. When I was expressing my concern about the treaty, he said, 'What could be done, when your own ambassador gave way?'"

It was now clear that Lord Castlereagh had not done all which might have been effected. Of this conduct "there was no man," as Sir Samuel Romilly well said,[48] "in the King's dominions who had more reason to complain, for there was no man living whom it could have robbed of a larger share of happiness." He felt it deeply; and there were not wanting those who would have gladly fanned his generous indignation into passion. The day following that on which the treaty had been laid before the House he "called at Lord Grenville's about Abolition—Lord Grey, Duke of Gloucester, and Ponsonby there. They showed opposition spirit in their manner of judging, advising, resolving, inquiring, and admitting."[49] But with him all private ends had been too long lost in the interests of the Abolition for him to be hurried on by personal feeling into a hasty opposition. At first indeed he was "much perplexed whether or not to oppose and strongly condemn ministers, and Castlereagh especially, for the Abolition business." But it was not of himself he thought. "I am afraid of injuring our great cause by exhibiting an appearance of diminished strength, owing to the country's being full of joy for the Peace, and I am afraid lest the Abolition proceedings should

[48] Debate, June 28. [49] Diary, June 7.

be deemed opposition and party measures. Babington, whom I have consulted, is strong against my quarrelling with government. Lord, direct me right."[50]

Further considerations strengthened this conviction. All his hopes now rested on the approaching Congress at Vienna, and it must be his care to call forth such a spirit in this country as should compel ministers to take a higher tone. "Do not you move at Leeds," he asks Mr. Hey, "on the Abolition business? Our best hopes rest on the country's manifesting a general and strong feeling on the subject." "It is indeed," he writes to Sheffield, "sad to find such an article in such a treaty —that the restoration of peace to Europe should be the letting loose the worst demons of intestine war throughout the African continent. But I have only time to say, that for the purpose of effecting all that in the present state of things yet remains to be done for the great cause in the Congress about to take place at Vienna, let the nation loudly and generally express its deep disappointment and regret, and most earnestly conjure both Houses, but especially the House of Commons, to use its utmost efforts in behalf of the unhappy Africans; expressing willingness to make further sacrifices, (Mauritius, St. Lucia, &c.) as the price of the detestable five years' Slave Trade, and of consenting to an immediate Abolition. Also, earnestly praying that all practicable measures may be adopted with a view to limiting and mitigating

[50] Diary, June 7.

the extent, and the miseries, and evil consequences of the treaty concluded, if the term cannot be shortened. Also praying that steps may be taken for making the Slave Trade after five years piracy, by a general Convention of all the European states."

The spirit which he wanted was rising in the country, but he would have called for it in vain if he had spoken the language of a party. The nation rejoiced too heartily in the blessings of peace to have any sympathy with opposition. Even as it was, there were some hearty Abolitionists who earnestly deprecated any attacks upon the ministry, and complained "that all the friends of peace would be arrayed against the Abolition." "I have used my utmost efforts," he assures one of them, "to keep it from becoming a party question, and the opposition have behaved handsomely in giving way to me." He strove most successfully. On the 17th of June, a great meeting of the Abolitionists was held at Freemasons' Hall, and party spirit was not suffered to intrude. A strong but temperate petition was agreed to; and, the more to mark the absence of an opposition spirit, intrusted for presentation to the Commons to "William Wilberforce, the father of our great cause." The same tone was held in parliament, when, on the 27th of June, the subject was brought forward by Lord Grenville in the Peers, and in the Commons by himself. Lord Grenville urged as a convincing proof that it was no party measure, that it was in truth "on these very motives its first promoter originally submitted it to parliament; he, whose name it will trans-

mit with unfading honour to all posterity; he, whose memory generations yet unborn, and nations yet uncivilized, will learn to bless. With these feelings, the two great party leaders of our times fought together, and together conquered under this standard," establishing within these lists a suspension of all hostilities —a sort of "Truce of God."

"It is not necessary," he himself told the House of Commons, "to dwell here on the nature of the Slave Trade. So many years, indeed, have elapsed since the question was discussed, that the particulars of the case have faded from our recollection, but in return our judgments have given it its place with that class of actions of which it is the natural associate, and having by law recognised its guilt as felony, it remains like the malefactor's carcass hung in chains: we may have forgot the circumstances of his crime, but its character stands unalterably fixed in our minds and memories. It might have been hoped therefore that the dethronement of Buonaparte would be a happy omen for the accomplishment of our views. He who has done so much to corrupt the moral feelings of the age, and to laugh at truth and justice as an exploded superstition, could not be expected to understand our principles. The grief consequently which I feel at this treaty is the more poignant, when I recur to the period at which it is introduced—a time when all Europe with one voice is returning thanks to God for its deliverance from slavery, when France has just risen from the weight of an iron despotism; and yet with the concur-

rence of this country her first act is to direct to another quarter of the globe the tide of misery. But England ought even now to lift up her voice, if possible to persuade France to resign the contract, and to obtain the assistance of foreign nations in endeavouring to procure this resignation. When the heads of all those now living are laid low, and the facts which now excite such powerful feelings are related by the pen of the cold, impartial historian; when it is seen that an opportunity like the present has been lost, that the first act of the restored King of France was the restoration of a trade in slavery and blood, what will be the estimate formed of the exertions which this country has employed, or of the effect which they have produced upon a people under such weighty obligations. Surely no very high opinion will be indulged either of British influence or of French gratitude."

His speech produced a great effect. He carried his address to the Prince Regent, and two days later an amendment to an address upon the peace, by the unanimous vote of the Commons. In the country it produced little less effect. One passing incident will illustrate its reception. "If in no other way we can prevail on France," he was reported to have said, "let us buy the Slave Trade of her." A few posts brought him from a country clergyman,[51] whose whole income was derived from private pupils, a promissory note for £100 "whenever that sum can avail in any degree to induce France to relinquish

[51] The Rev. Edward Ward of Iver.

the African Slave Trade." To Mr. Hey he communicated the issue of his motion.

"July 1, 1814.

"My dear Sir,

I have softened my language as much as possible, and by preventing the Abolition from becoming an opposition question, have produced an unanimous acceptance of my amendment to the address, as well as of my address itself. But we have declared, that the country still feels all its old interest in the business of the Slave Trade. We are known to have made efforts to call forth the expression of that feeling, and if it be not expressed, it will be supposed to be because it is not felt; and I am persuaded that Lord Castlereagh's exertions, and consequently his success at Vienna, (in the ensuing Congress,) and even the disposition of the French government itself to accede to our wishes, will much depend on the degree in which the country appears to feel warmly on the question.

"I take the pen into my own hand to conclude, which I am forced to do very abruptly. But I must say it would be very injurious, if our friends throughout the country were in general to forbear petitioning, under an idea of its being needless. Farewell.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Surely you in the country may agree, when we in parliament have concurred unanimously."

His hopes were not disappointed. He had not called in vain on the humanity of Britain. More than 800 petitions, with near a million of signatures, soon covered the table of the House of Commons, and Lord Castlereagh was warned that in the coming Congress the minister of England must speak out for Africa.

He had not been able to give all his time to this cause, great as had been its claims upon him. Many different subjects filled up his days. "Tuesday. To Baldwin's Gardens—Central National School meeting—Walmsley—Mr. Johnson a good man—children admirably taught, and general spirit delightful and animating—the difference between them and the Lancastrians[52] very striking—exemplifying the distinction between Church of England and Dissenterism—the intelligence, and fixed but not apparently nervous or feverish attention pleased me much. Strange incident of Princess of Wales running away alone at seven in the evening, and not getting back till three—Bishop of Salisbury the hunter, and present at every interview since, and says the Prince has behaved as kindly and properly as possible. Thursday. To laying first stone of Westminster school for 1000 children. Duke of York did it. Archbishop of Canterbury and bishops there. Friday. Freemasons' Tavern by

[52] "You, I assure you, had some influence in deciding me at last to yield to the earnest entreaties of the British and Foreign School Society, that I would become a vice-president of that institution. I subscribe also to Dr. Bell's institutions; but the latter do nothing abroad; though, so far as my experience goes, I prefer them to the Lancastrian schools, for such of our countrymen as can conscientiously be brought up in them."—William Wilberforce Esq. to William Hey Esq. July 7, 1815.

twelve to meet Archbishop of Canterbury about Suffering Germans' Committee." Another meeting for this object was held upon the 21st of June, and he went on the day "to the City of London Tavern to meet Blucher. They made me take the chair; and Blucher made me a very civil speech, (he spoke in German, Mr. Kuper, the Queen's chaplain, acting as interpreter,) most pleasing in manner and demeanour."

Mr. Wilberforce's own manner might likewise be read without an interpreter. Nor was it only monarchs whose hearts he could unlock. He took his children to see the Cossacks at the Portman Barracks. They had been so worried by curious intruders, that "they could not bear to be looked at," says one of the party,[53] "and but for his kind countenance we should have been turned away. We were so fortunate as to meet your son there, who served as a very able interpreter to Mr. Wilberforce, who shook hands with the Cossacks; and even the roughest of them, who looked as if he had never smiled in his life, unbent his ebon brows and relaxed the muscles of his iron face, and even kissed his hand when he came away."

The bustle of this triumphant season added to his occupations. More than once he was summoned by Alexander to conversations, in which the Emperor spoke French, and he replied in English. The Duchess of Oldenburgh, and the King of Prussia, alike desired to see and talk with him; and from

[53] In a letter to the late Arthur Young Esq.

the latter he received a set of Dresden china, "the only thing," he playfully declared, "I ever got by spouting." But none amongst the band of monarchs and nobles interested him more than Prince Czartoriski, a Polish Prince, formerly Foreign Secretary to the Emperor. "Czartoriski came in and talked to me for an hour or two about his country, and especially our institutions, with a view to their adoption. He seems eager for useful information, and whatever could improve the people. He acquiesced when I lamented the Emperor's being only fêted, and not let alone to see useful things, courts of justice, &c."

Such reflections could not but force themselves upon the mind of calm and rational observers of these brilliant days. "After we had, Hezekiah-like, ostentatiously exhibited our riches," says Mrs. H. More, "our gold and our silver, after having gorged them with banquets, which I hear they disliked, why were they not introduced to something serious besides the Quakers' meeting? I did not dislike to let them witness our own grandeur, and I like to express our respect and admiration for them, but why keep back from them every thing that was useful? They had really little more good to carry home than poor Omai had." He at least was free from this reproach. "Too late," he says, June 30th, "for dinner, because writing about the Bible Society for Czartoriski, and getting for him some Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor." Many years afterwards, almost the last visit Mr. Wilberforce received was from this interesting man, when having resigned Russian greatness to fight

the battles of his injured country, he sought the shores of England as an exile and a refugee.

The temper of his own mind indeed was wholly undisturbed by the agitation round him. "How delightful," he says after an evening spent in social intercourse, "to see the love, simple devotedness, and gratitude of the three ——'s! How it shames my lukewarmness! Lord, forgive and help me, and let the example spur me on to greater diligence." "The Bishop of Calcutta, Teignmouth, and C. Grant, &c. dined with me. Long and highly interesting talk with Bishop Middleton. He seems very earnest and pondering to do good—hopes for churches in different parts of India—favourable to schools and a public library—a college with discipline. His powers greater than we conceived—though his salary only £5000 a year—sad work—too little—less by £1000 a year than a puisne judge. Before dinner I had heard —— and —— consulting when they should go away. I strongly urged their not hurrying away, as rude. I hope that this intercourse softens. There is no saying how incivilities sometimes disgust and do mischief, where the object is to cultivate regard. They are surely most opposite to St. Paul and Peter's precepts, and to Christ's example. In fact they arise from selfishness in some degree."

It is well worth while to trace up to its fountain-head, this quiet recollection of his principles amidst the hurry of his public life. Another entry of his Diary will point it out. When most engaged this summer, he says, "I must try what I long ago

heard was the rule of E. the great upholsterer, who when he came from Bond Street to his villa, always first retired into his closet. 'I will do it, though but for a short time. It will, with God's blessing, be useful both for self-examination for the past, and seeking God for the future." "I have been keeping too late hours, and hence I have had but a hurried half hour in a morning to myself. Surely the experience of all good men confirms the proposition, that without a due measure of private devotions the soul will grow lean. It is remarkable that at such times my business and worldly concerns have also gone on ill; enforcing on me old Sir M. Hale's remark, which might have been deemed too strong. O Lord, help me. I will try to assign at least an hour in the morning, and when circumstances will permit, the same in the evening, for Scripture reading, private devotion, and meditation. How little can I now realize the circle of angels and unseen spirits! Yet I hope I can truly say I allow not my corruptions. O Lord, strengthen my faith, send the Spirit of Thy Son into my heart, that I may call Thee Father, and set my affections upon things above." [51]

At the end of July he left London, to devote the quiet of the summer to his great design. All his hopes hung on the result of the approaching Congress. It was therefore of the utmost moment to give to the public mind on the continent the same impulse which it had received in England. He had already tried, through Cardinal Gonsalvi, to influence the Romish conclave, and he now opened a corre-

[51] Journal.

spondence with a number of literati, Alexander Humboldt, Sismondi, Chateaubriand, and Madame de Stael, in the hope that he might act through them upon their countrymen. He was himself preparing his chief effort, a printed letter to Talleyrand, which was to contain the strength of the Abolition cause, and to be dispersed as the manifesto of its supporters. "How time flies away!" he writes![55] "For a third time are we now all collected at Sandgate, enjoying wherever we are the overflowing bounty of the Almighty. The quiet of this place, so great a contrast to the bustle of my London life, produces a general sleepiness and stupefaction, which almost disqualify me for all active employment of my mental faculties. I must try to rouse and lash myself into something like animation; but I can truly declare that I wish the office of writing a piece for general circulation devolved on a more able hand. I will do my best however, after having executed two or three lesser duties which require immediate attention. I mean to write to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, and a private letter to Talleyrand. I hope herewith to transmit one to Chateaubriand. You know probably that Lord Castlereagh charged himself with communicating with the Pope. Have you seen the article in the Edinburgh Review on the Revival of the Slave Trade? I do not think it quite fair, and any statements which can justly be pronounced unfair are always in the end injurious as well as unjust."

His work was intended to combine narrative and reasoning; a few extracts from the best sources being

[55] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Aug. 1.

to form an Appendix. These were to be selected from the authors with which his former studies had made him familiar. Accordingly he writes to Mr. Macaulay to extract for him some passages from Goldberry's Travels in Africa. "Goldberry suggests that a valuable commercial connexion might be formed with Bambouk, by obtaining access to the gold mines. This is just an idea likely to hit a Frenchman's fancy, though not the wary and well-informed mind of the shrewd Prince of Benevento."[56] "I lent my Goldberry to Mr. Jerningham, the secretary to the Board of English Roman Catholics, and as Mr. Charles Butler assured me, a confidential friend of Louis XVIII. In a long conversation with Mr. Jerningham after his breakfasting with me at Kensington Gore, he appeared full of all the old prejudices and errors with which we had to contend in the beginning of our African warfare—such as the Africans being in a state of the most cruel slavery in their own country, and all the rest. Now to have all these calumnies contradicted by an avowed friend of the Slave Trade like Goldberry, appeared to me an opportunity not to be lost."[57] Mr. Macaulay mentions in reply some rising matters which might soon recall him to London, and ends, as an excuse for brevity, with a complaint of being "harassed dreadfully by Mrs. T. from Scotland, who calls on me and runs away with all my time."[58] "My dear Macaulay," he replies, "I would go to John o'Groat's house

[56] Aug. 8. [57] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Aug. 1.
[58] Z. Macaulay Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 9.

if it were wanted. I forgot—Mrs. T. is in Scotland, or rather now that Mrs. T. is not in Scotland—how shocking that you should be bored with her! But there is a breed of Mrs. T.s, who are the plague of my life and the enemies of my usefulness. Some of them I myself generate and carry about with me, in the infirmities of my own mind. But seriously, so far as writing is concerned, though even here interrupted occasionally, I can be far more quiet than in town. Otherwise I should have decided to go up to-morrow. I feel a nervous irritation which prompts me to be on the spot when you are all at work. But I believe, in my sober judgment, I am more likely to do the little I can do here than elsewhere."

The want of books however, and a wish to be near Peltier, the translator of his work, obliged him at length to return to London. This was no inconsiderable sacrifice. He loved to spend his summer holidays in the retirement of the country surrounded by his children; with whom he had "begun walking, and examining them in walks in the books which they are reading, and talking them over together." While "in the evening," almost the greatest of their treats, he was "reading to them Shakespeare." Occasionally, too, he made excursions with them for the day; and in "Cæsar's camp and the cherry orchards" all the burden of his business was thrown off, and he was the most cheerful of the party. "We took our dinner with us upon Saturday," is the description of such a day this summer in the letter of a guest, "and were fourteen in number. Mr. Wilberforce made us all very happy.

He read, and talked, and carved, and reminded us of the benevolence of God in making the avenues of innocent pleasure so numerous, and forming us for so many enjoyments which have nothing sinful in them." "There is no way," is his own remark on this day, "in which children's tempers are more indicated than in such excursions." With the same watchfulness for their advantage he now tells Mr. Macaulay, that though "at first disposed at once to cut his cables and slip off for London," he had postponed his journey "until Monday, because I am to take —— with me on his way to school, and I like to make Sunday his last day at home. I think it tends to associate religion and domestic tenderness; to identify them with each other, and thereby augment both."

He continued his work at Battersea Rise, where he was a guest in the house which he had inhabited so many years before. He had left Sandgate hoping only to be kept a few days near London, but the claims of business multiplied upon him. On the 2nd of September he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "My anticipations are verified. I am forced to stay three or four days longer, I trust not more; but the work to be done is far too important to be neglected, or not to be done where it can be done best. The interests at stake are so prodigious that even the probability of advancing them constitutes an object of vast amount. What a comfort it is that my absence from you and our dear children is not when I am engaged in the work, however necessary for self-defence, and therefore justifiable, of blood and tears—making others miserable while endeavouring to secure our own happiness; but on the contrary, in the

work of mercy and love; a work which may truly be said to breathe the same spirit as that of Him whose coming was announced as 'peace on earth, and good-will towards men'! Aye, and surely we need not leave out the most honourable part of the service, 'Glory to God in the highest.' For I am occupied, I trust, in preparing an entrance into Africa for the gospel of Christ. I must say that I account it one of the greatest of the many and great mercies and favours of the Almighty, (oh how many and how great!) that His providence connected me with this good cause. I might have been occupied as honestly, but in ways, political ways for instance, in which the right path was doubtful."

He touches here upon a secret spring which led to many of his Abolition efforts. "I greatly fear," he tells Mr. Stephen, "if Hayti grants to France a colonial monopoly in return for the recognition of its independence, that all commerce with us will be excluded, and with it our best hopes of introducing true religion into the island. Now I will frankly own to you, that to introduce religion appears to me the greatest of all benefits. I blame myself for not having earlier stated to you my feelings on this head: It has arisen from a want of reflection, for my principles have always been the same. God grant we may not hinder the gospel of Christ. O remember that the salvation of one soul is of more worth than the mere temporal happiness of thousands or even millions. In this I well know you agree with me entirely."

Another week had passed at Mr. Thornton's, and

upon the 7th he writes again. "It quite goes to my heart to think what a disappointment it will be to you, and to our dear children, that I am forced to put off my journey till next week. On Tuesday or Wednesday I confidently trust, if please God I am well in the interim, that my business need not detain me. But when I yesterday proceeded coolly to balance the reasons for and against my setting off to-day, when into the staying scale was to be put the consideration that I am writing a piece, which if it please God to give it His blessing, may be considerably efficient in saving a number of human lives and an amount of bodily suffering and of mental agony which surpasses almost all power of calculation;—the other, in which was the benefit, too little I fear, which my family would receive in the interval from my presence, and still more the pleasure it would give to all of us, fairly kicked the beam. It is unspeakably gratifying to me to know that you are fully alive to these arguments, and though it were at ever so great a cost of feeling, would advise me to do what I should believe to be right. It is right also that I should conclude and go to my work; but you will explain to the children . . with an especial birth-day kiss for —— . . why I stay, and I hope it may help to teach them to deny themselves, and to ask themselves what will please God, not what they would find at the moment most gratifying. Farewell."

There was nothing more remarkable about him than the cheerful spring of his natural affections, even under the heaviest pressure of perplexing busi-

ness. "There," he said when hurried once almost beyond bearing, calling the attention of a friend to a sudden burst of voices, "how can I be worried by such trifles, when I have such constant remembrances of God's goodness to me?" It was his children playing over head with a noisy glee which would have jarred upon the feelings of almost any one besides himself. Thus amidst his present business he rescued time enough to write to his second son.

"Battersea Rise, Sept. 14, 1814.

"My very dear ——,

I do not relish the idea that you are the only one of my children who has not written to me during my absence, and that you should be the only one to whom I should not write: I therefore take up my pen, though but for a very few moments, to assure you that I do not suspect your silence to have arisen from the want of affection for me, any more than that which I myself have hitherto observed has proceeded from this source. There is a certain demon called procrastination, who inhabits a castle in the air at Sandgate, as well as at so many other places, and I suspect that you have been carried up some day, (at the tail of your kite perhaps,) and lodged in that same habitation, which has fine large rooms in it from which there are beautiful prospects in all directions; and probably you will not quit a dwelling-place that you like so well, till you hear that I am on my way to Sandgate. You would meet the 'to-morrow man' there, (it just occurs to me,) and I hope you will

have prevailed on him to tell you the remainder of that pleasant story, a part of which Miss Edgeworth has related, though I greatly fear he would still partake so far of the spirit of the place as to leave a part untold till—to-morrow. But I am trifling sadly, since I am this morning unusually pressed for time. I will therefore only guard my dear boy seriously against procrastination, one of the most dangerous assailants of usefulness, and assure him that I am to-day, to-morrow, and always while I exist,

His affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Meanwhile the Duke of Wellington became ambassador at Paris, and Lord Castlereagh had proceeded to his post at Vienna. Whatever may be thought of Lord Castlereagh's previous conduct, he now heartily desired to promote the objects of the Abolitionists. Lord Liverpool indeed declared on behalf of his colleagues and of himself, "If I were not anxious for the Abolition of the Slave Trade on principle, I must be aware of the embarrassment to which any government must be exposed from the present state of that question in this country."[59] Yet the negociators required instruction, both on the state of the Trade in general, and on the grounds of the exemption which was claimed for the north-west coast of Africa. "You will concur with me," writes Mr. Wilberforce to Mr. Macaulay,[60] "that it may be well to furnish Lord Castlereagh with short notes like a lawyer's brief, of

[59] Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. Sept. 7. [60] Aug. 3.

all the main propositions on which the case of Abolition rests, or rather I mean of all the facts. For having been our opponent, he never, depend on it, admitted into his mind any of those considerations which were so firmly established in ours, as to be a sort of self-evident propositions in the last years of our warfare. I would abstain of course from any statements which might appear to him invidious, and be as it is vulgarly called 'a slap on the face.' A copy of this paper may then be made for the Duke of Wellington, and also for any other of the foreign ministers. Lord Castlereagh must also be provided with such a statement of the present condition of St. Domingo as will enable him to convince Talleyrand that the attempt to recover it by force will end in disgrace. Stephen can best draw up the account I mean. I see nothing else to be said to Lord Castlereagh, except what I mean to press as strongly as I possibly can without offending him,—the opposite reception he will have succeeding or failing for us." "I am afraid of their being too sure of having us friendly if they do any thing, and not being enough aware what would be our feelings if we should hereafter see reason to believe that the Abolition might have been wholly effected if we would have purchased it by restoring the colonial possessions." [61]

In drawing up this "brief," no pains were spared by himself or his associates. Mr. Stephen furnished copious details concerning St. Domingo. To secure the fulfilment of the promise of the French, that the

[61] To J. Stephen Esq.

Slave Trade should not be revived where it had been actually suppressed, Mr. Macaulay collected a vast body of convincing proofs, that, except for a few scattered smugglers, the Slave Trade had ceased on the whole windward coast of Africa from Cape Blanco nearly to the Equator. The small island of Bissao, belonging to the Portuguese, formed the sole exception. "I only wish," wrote Captain Irby, who had just returned from the African station, "that it had been blown up with the Serpentine fleet."[62]

The proof was most complete: "I am delighted," says Mr. Wilberforce, "to find it so much more valuable and efficient than I had conceived. I do not think a grain can be added to the weight with which your zeal, diligence, and method in preserving your papers, have loaded the scale in our favour." It seemed impossible for the French ministers to elude the force of this evidence. "I do not see how on earth they can," exclaimed the Duke of Wellington with a soldier's bluntness, when Mr. Macaulay exhibited his proofs at a personal interview.[63] This demand accordingly, as well as the other efforts of the Abolitionists, were heartily supported by the Duke; so warmly indeed did he at this time devote himself to it that Mr. Wilberforce thought a caution needed, "lest so much attention paid to a provision for excluding the Slave Trade from a certain part of the coast should convey an impression that the friends of the cause would be perfectly contented

[62] Z. Macaulay Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 10.
[63] Ib. Aug. 8.

with this qualified Abolition."[64] He stated therefore their strong persuasion that the French government might be induced to abandon the Trade altogether, provided some compensation was furnished by this country. "Grateful," he adds, "for your Grace's exertions, they must, and ought ever to be; but they indulge a confident hope that your Grace in this, as in so many other instances, will be able to achieve a complete victory."

If this idea of compensation, afterwards tried ineffectually, had ever succeeded, it must have been before the public mind in France had declared itself in favour of the Slave Trade. "Je vois avec affliction," writes Humboldt, "que dans ce pays, où l'on se refroidit sur tout, la question de la traité est consideré avec une coupable indifference."[65] "Elle n'est point ici, comme elle l'étoit en Angleterre, une affaire d'argent; elle est liée uniquement à des passions nationales."[66] But as an English and a revolutionary measure, the Abolition soon became so unpopular, that the writers for their stage "introduced into their old plays sarcasms against it, as *clap-traps*."[67] "Madame de Stael confirmed the information received from the Duke of Wellington, of the impracticability of getting any articles favourable to the Abolition inserted in the French Journals."[68]

[64] W. Wilberforce Esq. to the Duke of Wellington, Sept. 9.

[65] Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 30.

[66] M. Sismondi to W. Wilberforce Esq. March 3, 1815.

[67] J. Stephen Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Oct. 14.

[68] Letter from General Macaulay, (Oct. 8,) who was this autumn in Paris at his request, and whose perfect knowledge of the French language enabled him to be particularly useful.

There had been no leader of the cause in France to rescue it, as Mr. Wilberforce had done in England, from the contamination of the Jacobins, and the Royalists looked coldly on a project which had been advocated by the "amis des noirs." "French Royalists," Lord Holland wrote to him,[69] "make no difference between you and me, or between me and Tom Paine." "I have received from Chateaubriand a letter which is far from satisfactory. Such I really grieve to say as I should have expected if I had credited what had been reported by his enemies of his trimming politics. He says that the principal defender of our cause 'parmi nous, est un regicide.' Who does he mean? I understood that Gregoire[70] had opposed the King's death in the Convention. And he suggests the removal of the phantom we have left in the Isle of Elba, 'comme pour nous menacer, et nous effrayer.'"[71]

"We greatly want a select society of literary men," he had written to Humboldt,[72] "to draw up and circulate intelligence respecting our cause. Would you have the goodness to be one of a little committee of this sort?" "On y a souvent pensé," was the reply to this proposal,[73] "mais les gens qui connoissent bien l'état actuel de Paris croyent que cet établissement nuira beaucoup à la bonne cause. Tout le monde se gendarmera contre cette Société. Le souvenir de celle des *amis des noirs* se reveillera. Des hommes

[69] Nov. 13, 1815.

[70] The Abbé Gregoire, being at the time on a mission in Savoy, gave no vote; and the part which he was disposed to take is doubtful.

[71] W. Wilberforce Esq. to General Macaulay, Oct. 25.

[72] Sept. 16. [73] Sept. 28.

tres zelés pour l'Abolition de la traite, et qu'il seroit impossible d'exclure, sont detestés pour des motifs politiques."

While Humboldt thus increased his sense of the caution which the posture of affairs required, he encouraged him to address the French nation in his own name. He had mentioned in his former letter the plan of his intended work. "I have been writing a pamphlet, partly to inform, and partly to interest and affect the public, by appealing to all that is honourable and generous in the French feelings. The form of my piece I mean to be a letter to the Prince of Benevento."[74] "J'approuve beaucoup votre lettre à M. de Talleyrand," was Humboldt's reply,[75] "elle fixera l'attention du public, et elle sera d'autant plus necessaire qu'on s'occupe ici beaucoup des taxes sur les boissons et pas du tout de l'Abolition de la Traité."

Though his correspondence with foreigners as well as that with the British ministers had occupied him greatly, yet his work was now on the point of appearing. "I finished my pamphlet on Tuesday last, and am now clearing away my arrear of letters. I am writing to the Duke of Wellington, the Emperor of Russia, Lord Liverpool, and Lord Bathurst, about the Abolition."[76] He despatched also a private letter of explanation to Talleyrand, and besides receiving a civil answer, he heard afterwards that the Prince had spoken to a third party of his pamphlet as "eloquent and convincing." "La chose," he added, "n'est

[74] W. Wilberforce Esq. to Baron Humboldt, Sept. 16.
[75] Sept. 28. [76] Diary, Sept. 30.

demontrée il s'agit de la demontrer à la France."[77] Though reminded meanwhile that his letter was "impatiently expected,"[78] it was the middle of October before he could get it from the printer's hands. The information which he had received from Humboldt had not led him to expect for it a very wide circulation. "Il est affreux de le dire, le public est si froid pour cet objet, que malgré la celebrité de votre nom, aucun libraire à Paris n'imprimera la brochure à ses fraix." The Duke of Wellington however undertook to disperse it for him at Paris, where he also circulated the substance of his Letter to his Yorkshire Constituents, which Madame de Stael had translated at the Duke's suggestion.[79] Its diffusion by this and similar means secured the notoriety of his pamphlet on the continent. "It reads extremely well," says Sismondi, "and I am persuaded has been much read at Paris."[80] "Mr. Villiers parloit de faire traduire de nouveau votre lettre à M. de Talleyrand: je n'y vois aucune espèce d'avantage; on peut relever dans le style du traducteur quelques légères incorrections, mais dans son ensemble elle est écrite d'une manière qui fait une impression profonde, l'eloquence Angloise a pénétré au travers du François, on ne la lit point sans emotions, et l'on ne gagneroit rien à changer un peu la tournure des phrases. Il n'en est pas de même du résumé du temoignage de—Il est un mauvais écrivain, et tous les efforts du traducteur le laissent tel. Le premier etoit

[77] Sir Sidney Smith to W. Wilberforce Esq. Dec. 25.
[78] Letter from General Macaulay. [79] Ib. Sept. 29.
[80] Letter from Hon. I. Villiers to W. Wilberforce Esq. Feb. 15, 1815.

complètement barbare, mais mon ami Mr. Dumont lui-même n'en a encore fait qu'un écrit fort mediocre." [81]

As the autumn advanced, the effects of these labours [82] became evident. The recovery of St. Domingo, which had been the favourite scheme in France, was first abandoned. And "at length," he says, "on the 15th of November, I heard from the Duke of Wellington that the French had actually issued an order, prohibiting all French subjects from slaving to the North of Cape Formosa. A grand business, but much detail needed." [83] This news had been preceded a few days by the following letter of congratulation from Madame de Stael.

"Combien vous devez être heureux de votre triomphe, vous l'emporterez et c'est vous et Lord Wellington qui aurez gagné cette grande bataille pour l'humanité. Soyez sure que votre nom et votre persévérance ont tout fait. D'ordinaire les idées triomphent par elles mêmes et par le tems, mais cette fois c'est vous qui avez devancé les siècles. Vous avez inspiré à votre Héros Wellington autant d'ardeur pour faire du bien qu'il en avoit eu pour remporter des victoires, et son crédit vers la famille royale a servi à vous pauvres noirs. Vous avez écrit une lettre à Sismondi qui est pour lui comme une couronne civique, ma petite fille tient de vous une plume d'or qui sera sa dot dans le

[81] Letter from M. Sismondi to W. Wilberforce Esq.

[82] Besides Mr. Wilberforce's letter, a pamphlet of Sismondi's and a short address had been dispersed by the African Institution, both in English and German. Mr. Clarkson who visited Paris in the autumn had also reprinted the translation of his work on the impolicy of the Slave Trade.

[83] Diary.

ciel.[84] Enfin vous avez donné du mouvement pour la vertu à une génération qui sembloit morte pour elle. Jouissez de votre ouvrage, car jamais gloire plus pure n'a été donnée à un homme—

" Je me mets à vos pieds de tout mon cœur,

A. DE STAEL.

" Paris, ce 4 9bre, 1814."

These partial successes were however far outweighed by many opposite appearances. A detailed account, sent him by a friend at Havre, of the preparation of nine slave ships in that port, " completely sickened " his " heart. How I should like," he says, hearing that some of the parties concerned were his countrymen, " to catch the Englishmen some day when on shore, and send them to slave in New South Wales."[85] " I know not that in all my long experience of Abolitionism, I ever felt a keener paroxysm of grief and indignation. Oh that it might please God to dash to the ground that bloody cup which they are preparing to quaff with so much avidity. They really appear to my mind's eye to be so many demons exulting over their savage orgies with grim, ferocious joy."[86] Yet in the darkest moments his trust in God was firm, and he still cheered his associates with assurances of success. " I am provoked," he says, " but not despondent."[87] " Sismondi's pamphlet is an admirable one, and the

[84] The Duchess de Broglie had translated part of Mr. Wilberforce's Letter to his Constituents: an occasion of which Gen. Macaulay had availed himself in order to present to her a gold pen, as from the author.

[85] To J. Stephen Esq. Oct. 4.

[86] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Oct. 13. [87] To Gen. Macaulay, Oct. 11.

circumstance that so many literary men are friendly to our cause is to me indicative of good, an omen of a favourable turn in the public mind; for France is a country much swayed by popular opinions."[88] "And when men are used to act in bodies with a sort of esprit de corps, they often turn round altogether. The rising up of another able continental author is strongly indicative of the progress of our cause. Depend on it we are gaining ground. God is with us."[89] "When a cause is grounded like ours in justice and humanity, in truth and nature, we may cherish the hopes of a great effect from the writings of the literati."[90] "Permit me," he concluded a letter of acknowledgment for the pamphlet of Sismondi, "as a mark of my respect and a pledge of our friendly connexion, to present you with a publication of my own, written (somewhat too hastily) for the information of our House of Lords when the question of the Slave Trade was coming before them for the last time in 1807. I fear that I am subjecting myself to the imputation of offering you a brazen shield for the golden one you use, and which I trust I may have the honour of receiving from your own hands."

It is not a little interesting to turn from these public objects to the details of his private life. He was again at Sandgate, living in the midst of his children, studying the Scriptures daily with some of them, "walking and reading with them all, and bringing them into the habits he desired by kind, not violent

[88] Diary, Oct. 20. [89] To Z. Macaulay, Esq. Sept. 30.
[90] To James Stephen Esq. Oct. 15.

means."[91] He was as busy too doing good to those around him, as if his sympathies had never wandered from his own immediate circle; entering eagerly into any individual tale of suffering—as when he "heard" this year of a case, ("the shocking account of Mrs. R.'s cruelty to her child,") which he took up and carried through, at a great expense of time and trouble, and in spite of repeated threatenings of personal violence from the brutal parent—and labouring too by schools and other institutions to relieve the want and ignorance around him. "The adult school," wrote a friend staying at this time in his family to Mr. Arthur Young, "is established here; a room and teachers provided, and all will be left in good train. Mr. Wilberforce went himself, read them extracts from Pole's History of Adult Schools, and made them a little speech, saying how much he respected their good sense for coming. You would have been delighted with seeing him seated by the old ladies, with the utmost patience, kindness, and humility, fairly teaching them their letters, and quite unconscious that it was at all more remarkable in him than in any common person. This was beautiful in him, and highly useful and encouraging in its effects upon the institution."

Another day he was endeavouring by letter to adjust a disagreement between two absent friends, telling him who had taken the offence, "It grieves and justly grieves me, loving and respecting you both as I do, to think that your friendship should be in any

[91] Diary.

measure injured by that which is in reason an utterly inadequate cause for producing such an effect. As I hinted to you, my dear ——, you men of meditation (though I sincerely acknowledge and covet your ruminating habit) are liable to the fault of weaving a web out of your own cogitations, which has no substance but that ideal one which renders it the basis of your castles in the air, and leads you often, or at least sometimes, to false solutions of enigmas, and mistaken views of character; though I grant that it enables you to fix and retain conceptions of the passing events of life with their causes and consequences, which flit away and are forgotten by us bird-witted gentry, as Locke or Lord Bacon calls us. But I must break off." Nor was Christian courtesy to those who were his accidental neighbours forgotten. "The ——s called—very friendly. How every day enforces the duty of being always disposed to close breaches instead of widening them! I had not called on them last year—the effect of want of time. They were affronted—but she very wisely . . oh the good of friendly frankness on proper occasions and to proper people . . told me of it. I instead of excusing humbled myself, and on Christian principles sought and took pains to heal the breach, and have at length succeeded, and much prejudice done away." A few hours took him to Deal Castle, where he was "kindly welcomed. Carrington has made it an excellent house. He and I to Walmer Castle, and went over it. Not there for near thirty years before in Pitt's time. Next day home again—all delighted to see me, and most kind."

It is no wonder that thus causing and enjoying the present social happiness, he should have "felt melancholy at the idea of breaking up and going to town."[92] But the session was about to open, and duty called him up to London.[93] "Whitbread strong against government, and overbearing. Opposition seem to mean to practise the game of running down the ministry as drivellers. How impudent this, considering all things! Oh that they had abolished! How cheerily would I then defend them! Much distressed however about American war. Yet afraid of talking lest I should do harm rather than good by encouraging Maddison to stick out for terms."[94] But his main business was still with his own cause. "We have seen much of Wilberforce," Mr. Henry Thornton tells Hannah More,[95] "and heard his letters from many of the renowned of the earth, all seeming to pay homage to him. Lord Castlereagh tells him that he has obeyed his commands, and put his book into the hands of each of the Sovereigns. Talleyrand's last letter has rather a clearer acknowledgment than before of his sympathy with Wilberforce, as to the grand object. The most happy part of the intelligence is an official assurance of an 'ordonnance' of some sort issued recently by the French government, excluding French slave traders from all the northern parts of Africa; and the line is so drawn that Sierra Leone, and all the settlements restored by the treaty with France, as well as a very large district

[92] Diary.
[93] Nov. 10.
[94] Diary, Nov. 1.
[95] Dec. 2.

below Sierra Leone, are exempt from their molestations. I almost anticipate more good from these new efforts of our friends than even from the Abolition voted here; and the name of Wilberforce has attained new celebrity, and his character and general opinions a degree of weight, which perhaps no private individual not invested with office ever possessed. My delight has consisted much in observing his Christian simplicity, and the general uniformity in his character and conduct, amidst the multitude of compliments from the great, made on the part of some with much feeling. He is indeed in his usual bustle, but he reminds me nevertheless of that saying which was applied to Fox, that the greatest objects, or the most heavy load of business, seemed never to put him into that petty tumult which is the common mark of inferior men. Wilberforce expressed his regret that Hatchard has not sent you his book. It is called a Letter to Talleyrand. It is well adapted to his purpose, and every line of it is manifestly written for use and not for fame, though made a little French in its style in some parts. I thought it admirably calculated to give the French reader a persuasion of the integrity and unadulterated benevolence of at least one public character among the English."

The hostile feelings of the French ministers were not however abated. They even attempted to abridge the exemption promised to northern Africa by making Cape Three-points its southern limits, thus opening the Bight of Benin to the Slave Trade. "I have not however given up Cape Formosa," writes the

Duke of Wellington.[96] "I was in hopes," he adds, "that the King's measures had in some degree changed the public opinion; but I found yesterday that I was much mistaken. In truth we have nobody for us on the question excepting the King." Two months before Lord Bathurst had in like manner declared that no one across the water "was in earnest for the Abolition but the King of France. That he is so, his letter to the Regent, a copy of which I enclose, will I am sure convince you."[97] The vigilance of the Abolitionists had not let the time of his residence in England pass by without an effort to possess his mind with right notions on this subject. He had been presented while at Hartwell with Mr. Wilberforce's work on the Slave Trade, accompanied by Mr. Stephen's most impressive letter. The Archbishop of Rheims, who had been the channel of communication, expressed the King's intention of making himself completely master of a subject, with which he was already in some measure acquainted "par les differentes motions que vous avez faites au parlement sur cette grande question, et les discussions auxquelles elles ont donné lieu." "Pour moi," added the Archbishop, "j'y ai trouvé, monsieur, les sentimens de bonté et d'humanité, que j'avois reconnus en vous lorsque j'ai eu le plaisir de vous recevoir chez moi, et de vous y temoigner, ainsi qu' au célèbre ministre votre ami, que je retiens toujours tous les sentimens d'estime que j'avois pour l'un et l'autre."[98]

[96] Duke of Wellington to W. Wilberforce Esq. Dec. 14.
[97] Lord Bathurst to W. Wilberforce Esq. Oct. 7.
[98] Archbishop of Rheims to W. Wilberforce Esq. Feb. 6

The measures, however, which Louis XVIII. either would not or could not carry, were now about to be accomplished by a stronger hand. From his rock of Elba, Buonaparte had not been an unobservant witness of the feelings of this country, which he now probably for the first time believed to be sincere. Upon his sudden return to power, he attempted to ingratiate himself with England by proclaiming a total and immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade. Thus was the bloody cup dashed from the hands of France, and the scourge of Europe became the pacificator of Africa. And when Louis was again restored by British arms, he was not suffered to revive the hateful traffic. "I have the gratification of acquainting you," writes Lord Castlereagh, "that the long desired object is accomplished, and that the present messenger carries to Lord Liverpool the unqualified and total Abolition of the Slave Trade throughout the dominions of France. I must beg to refer you to his Lordship for the terms in which this has been effected; but I feel great satisfaction in persuading myself that, as they will leave you nothing to desire on the subject, so you will trace in them the undeviating and earnest exertions of the Prince Regent's ministers to effectuate this great object, which had been so impressively given them in charge." [99]

[99] To W. Wilberforce Esq. July 31, 1815

CHAPTER XXX.

JANUARY 1815 TO JANUARY 1816.

Christmas at Barham Court—Count de Limonade—Illness of Henry Thornton—His death—John Bowdler's death—Letters—Abolition matters—Register Bill—Corn Laws—Riot's—Letter to his son—Letter to Lord Liverpool—Mr. Stephen resolves to resign his seat—Diary—Waterloo—Blucher—Whitbread's death—Letter to Hannah More—Tour in Devonshire—Brighton—Mrs. Henry Thornton's death—Pavilion.

MR. WILBERFORCE had been long accustomed to make the opening of a new year a time for serious and devotional reflection. After morning service, on Sunday, Jan. 1st, (1815,) "I was much affected," is his entry, "O may it be permanently, by the reflections the seasons suggests. Read in the evening a sermon on the fig-tree a cumberer of the ground to my family." He was now occupying Barham Court, and with the holyday employments of his children . . . "reading Blair's Lectures, and Voltaire's Louis XIVth with W. hearing Hume" . . . and their holyday amusements . . . "Twelfth-night, and our children asking us, we invited the N.s, and all played blind-man's buff for two hours or more; reading Waverley, and sometimes chess" . . . he found himself, though in the country, "sadly pressed" by his "correspondence."

The part which his opposition to the Foreign Slave Trade had led him to take in behalf of Hayti added a new and interesting series to his correspondence with "the four quarters of the globe." A letter of this date thus describes its commencement.

TO ZACHARY MACAULAY ESQ.

"Barham Court, Jan. 7, 1815.

"My dear Friend,

* * * * * * *

I received the other day from Sir Sidney Smith, a letter from Vienna,[1] stating that he was busily employed for us, (also against the depredations of the Barbary powers,) but that he was almost aground for want of money, and that if £200 should be lodged for him at Coutts's by the African Institution he would account for it, and could use it beneficially. When I considered the man, the object, the sum, and the circumstances, I own I thought it would be clearly right for us to advance the money, but I did not like to do it on my own authority; I therefore wrote about it to the Duke of Gloucester. What think you?

* * * * * * *

I have had, last not least, a Haytian correspondent. Two days ago I received a note from Hatchard, telling me that a letter had come for me of 85 ounces, and was charged £37 10*s.* and that he had refused it. It was explained by a letter from the post-office, which very handsomely under the peculiar circum-

[1] Vid. Correspondence of W. Wilberforce Esq. &c.

stances of the case let me off for a pepper-corn of 7*s.* which I shall gladly pay. I will send you this letter from the Count de Limonade. How strikingly do we see the just and good dispensations of Providence produced by ways, in which at the time we little see the point to which we are tending! But I must break off. The account I have received of Henry Thornton is delightful. I mean, please God, to be at Kensington Gore for two nights next week to see him. Farewell.

Ever your sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Mr. Thornton was at this time occupying his house at Kensington Gore, to be nearer medical advice. His health, which was at no time robust, had been much weakened by a fit of illness in the autumn; but it was hoped that he was rallying from it, and no apprehensions were expressed of its ultimate result. On the 9th of January Mr. Wilberforce was "so busy with" his "letters" that he "could hardly find time" to leave the country; "but it would be unkind not to go to town for Henry's sake, if, as they think, I could be any comfort to him." The next day therefore he went up "to Kensington Gore, but did not see dear Henry till the next morning for fear of flurrying him." He had come to town with no idea that his friend was in any danger, and "was shocked" therefore "to hear" when he "saw Halford early the next morning, that a sad change had taken place within the last five or six days; inflammation going

towards the heart, and the greatest danger. Pennington agreed as to the danger, though not immediate. I had no idea of his danger till to-day. He is so weak that he could not talk for above a minute or two. His voice broken and feeble. Poor dear Henry!" The next day was devoted to attendance on the sufferer. "I ordered myself to be refused to all but particular friends. Dealtry and I up praying with Henry and Mrs. and Miss Thornton. Grant dined with us, and Stephen came in the evening. On the 13th he returned to Teston to attend upon another sick friend whom he had left behind, whence he wrote at night to Hannah More.

"Barham Court, Jan. 13, 1815.

"My dear Friend,

Though I am much fatigued, having been up early to breakfast and come off by the Maidstone coach which brought me to this place, I must send you a very few very hasty lines, though they will be the most melancholy communication my pen ever made to you. I went on Tuesday to Kensington Gore, to see our dear friend Henry Thornton. I had no alarm concerning the issue of his illness, but while there saw Halford and Baillie, and they are both of them alarmed; so also is Pennington, an apothecary of great sagacity and high character. God alone knows what the event will be, and it is this consideration that must silence all our murmurs and all our doubts, that whatever it may be, it will be ordained by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness. We may say however

that the sudden removal of such a man would be a most mysterious providence. Poor Mrs. Henry Thornton,—since I have regarded his death as a probable event, my heart has bled to see her surrounded by all her little ones. Still the event may not now take place; but I could not forbear making you partaker of my apprehensions.

I am ever your sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Our dear friend," he tells Mr. Macaulay on the following day, "is continually before my mind's eye, and his emaciated figure and face are very affecting. Above all, seeing poor Mrs. Thornton with her nine children makes my heart bleed. May it please God to raise him up again, in answer to the prayers of his many friends." Sunday brought a more favourable bulletin. "Dr. Warren had been called in, and saw no reason why Henry should not recover."[2] With these rekindled hopes he was "shocked and astonished by a letter from Dealtry, dated four o'clock on Monday, to say, that though Warren had called and said Henry was much the same, Pennington declared he was sinking fast, and could not survive the night. I was off in about an hour and posted up to town. Inquired at Palace Yard, and heard that our dear friend had expired at eight the preceding evening. Went on to Kensington Gore, where I found his family and sweet Mrs. Grant."[3] The next day was spent with the mourners. "In the morning I saw dear Henry's

[2] Diary. [3] Ib

body; I should not at all have known him, and oh how emaciated! Poor ——'s kind affection. Poor dear Mrs. Henry Thornton behaving with admirable firmness." On the 20th, he returned to Barham Court, "found all well, and oh how kind a reception; meaning fully to return again on Monday and be present at the funeral." Before Monday came he was himself so ill, that for a week he was confined entirely to his room, "giving up most unwillingly attending at the funeral." "On the 24th," he says, "dear Henry's body committed to the tomb—grieved I could not be there—a most respectable attendance." To Mr. Stephen on the following day he says, "I thank God I am much better. The respect and affection for our departed friend manifested by so many who were personally less intimate with him, are highly soothing and useful. They show that even in this world the end of the upright man is not only peace, but sometimes honour. My dear Stephen, I never can feel grateful enough for your excessive affection for me. May God bless you and reward you sevenfold for your exuberant kindness. How strongly has been enforced on me lately the comfort and benefit, as well as the moral duty, of contracting intimacies and friendships with the well-principled! The very sorrows of such persons are more enjoyable than the pleasures of the worthless."

"I ought not to delay noticing," he writes at the same time to Mr. Macaulay, "one part of your last letter. I cannot undertake to draw up an account of our dear departed friend, though I shall gladly look over what may be written by some other person, and

probably suggest observations. As soon as I return to Kensington Gore I will hunt for letters, but I fear I have not many that can be deemed at all adequate indications of his great mind. He wrote so fast commonly, as to do no justice to himself. I am decidedly of opinion that there should be some delineation of the man—a detailed account of his intellectual and moral character. If I were to name the person to draw all the outlines of the work it should be Gisborne; and I think we all should see it, and it should be understood that the statement is the deliberate, conscientious judgment of several of us, who had opportunities of knowing thoroughly his understanding, heart, and affections. I am the more desirous of this, because the exterior manner sometimes failed to do justice to the warm and generous heart that glowed within. Farewell, my dear Macaulay; I seem to love my own and our dear Henry's surviving friends better since his being taken away from us."

"My mind," he tells another friend at the conclusion of a business letter, "is in reality engrossed all this time by a different subject, and I scarcely need tell you that it is the loss of one of my oldest, kindest, most intimate, and most valuable friends. His death is indeed a loss, though so much more to poor Mrs. Henry Thornton than to any of us, that all comparison is at an end. However the old, well-worn consolation is not worn out, our loss is his gain, and we should indeed be selfish if we could even wish to call our friend back to inhabit once more an emaciated, suffering body, from the far different scene on which he

has now entered. The question concerning the intermediate state appears to me to be set at rest, (with those who admit the Divine authority of that part of the sacred Scriptures,) by our Saviour's language to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;' and if, as seems highly probable, the disembodied spirit, besides the enjoyment of the present state, is enabled to look forward to the glory, honour, and immortality which lie before it, what an exalted conception is given to us of the prospect suddenly presented to its view! I knew my deceased friend well, and I can truly say, after living in the same house with him for several years, and on terms of the closest intimacy and the most unreserved and unintermitted society for eighteen or nineteen subsequently, that a more upright character I never knew—taking the word in the largest sense, as expressing the fulfilment of every duty, and the cultivation of every Christian grace and moral virtue on right principles. To me who was used to consult with him on all public questions, and who profited so often from the extraordinary superiority of his understanding, the loss is almost irreparable. But it is the will of the Almighty, and it becomes us to submit. It is the ordination of infinite wisdom and goodness, and it becomes us to say, Thy will be done. I will not apologize for the serious strain of my letter, because I am persuaded you would wish me to pour forth of the fulness of my heart."

"I have been daily thinking of writing to you," he tells their common friend, Lord Teignmouth, "though

it should only be a few words of friendly salutation and condolence. The truth is, and I doubt not your own feelings may be appealed to for the justice of the remark, the loss of one dear friend increases our sense of the value of those that are left to us, and produces a disposition to renew the assurances of affectionate attachment, not from any idea of its being necessary so to do, but merely from the natural appetencies of the mind, from the disposition we feel to call on those we love to sympathize with us, especially in events in which they also have been deeply interested."[4]

Another blow soon followed. There was not perhaps any one amongst his younger friends whom he loved and respected as he did John Bowdler. "I loved him so warmly," he says when four busy years with all their obliterating influences had passed by since his death, "that it quite delights me to find him estimated at his true value. If poor Kirke White had lived he might have grown into something of the same kind. But Bowdler had a dignity—he would have become capable I assure you of thundering and lightening. And then he was the tenderest, and the humblest, and the most self-forgetting creature."[5] Bowdler too had just been mourning with him. On the sorrowful day which followed Henry Thornton's death, Mrs. Thornton had "sent for him. He came in the evening, and I had much talk with him. I took him to town next morning."[6] It was the last time they met on earth. The very next day "about

[4] To Lord Teignmouth, Jan. 28.

[5] To the Rev. Francis Wrangham, July 7, 1819. [6] Diary, Jan. 18.

one in the morning dear Bowdler burst a blood vessel, and until about seven, when his bed-maker came in, he lay in his chambers, humanly speaking in the most desolate state. Yet he told C. afterwards that his mind was then so filled with the Saviour that he thought of nothing else." Such was the colour of his thoughts for the ten following days, during which he meekly bore the sudden breaking up of the strongest natural affections, and the highest intellectual powers. Upon the 31st of January, he was pronounced "better, the inflammation of the lungs subdued, and its conquest thought a great point."[7] Yet on the following evening, when Mrs. Henry Thornton's business had again carried Mr. Wilberforce to town, "a note came to" him "at seven telling me of dear Bowdler's death at twelve o'clock this morning. Oh how little did I foresee, when we met lately at Kensington Gore, that it would be the last time of my intercourse with him on earth! O sit anima mea cum Bowdlero. I went on to Grosvenor Square, and saw his lifeless and ghastly frame."[8]

To Hannah More a few days later he pours out his heart.

"London, Feb. 11, 1815.

"My dear Friend,

Scarcely had a week passed away after the death of our dear friend Henry Thornton, before the excellent and elevated Bowdler was called out of this world, only less dear a friend as of more recent ac-

[7] Diary. [8] Ib.

quisition; and scarcely had we returned from his funeral, . . though there also I speak figuratively, because I was unable to attend from the continuance of the same indisposition which kept me from joining in the same sad office to my earlier friend, . . when the tidings arrive of the departure of Dr. Buchanan. How striking! We are all involuntarily looking round and asking with an inquiring eye, Who next, Lord? Oh may the warnings have their due effect in rendering us fit for the summons. But I at this moment recollect some important and urgent claims on my time (too little for them) before I must go out of town, and I must therefore break off unwillingly, for my stream of thought was in full flow, and it beats against the barrier. Kindest remembrances. Farewell. I enclose the half of a bank note; the remainder shall follow.

Yours ever most sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

These deep tones of manly affection are strikingly contrasted with his lowly estimation of himself. On Sunday, Feb. 12th, he was at Battersea Rise and received the "Sacrament. Mrs. H. Thornton staid for the first time since her husband's death, and was much affected. Indeed, so hard a creature as myself was so. What letters did I see yesterday, one quite exquisite from M. How wonderfully the power of true Christianity is displayed in the tempers, feelings, and even reflections of the several sufferers! Harford,

one of them, having lost a beloved father, indicated the same blessed sentiments and feelings."[9] To this friend he wrote two days later.

TO J. S. HARFORD ESQ.

"Kensington Gore, Feb. 14, 1815.

"My dear Sir,

Even by those who think and feel concerning the events of this chequered life as real Christians, such an incident as the death of a parent, or even of a near and dear friend, will be felt severely; and indeed it ought to be so felt, for here, as in so many other instances, it is the glorious privilege of Christianity and the evidence of its superior excellence, that it does not, like the systems of human fabrication, strive to extinguish our natural feelings, from a consciousness that it is only by lessening them that it can deal with them, if I may so express myself, and enable us to bear the misfortune as we ought, but it so softens, and sweetens, and increases the sensibility of our hearts, as to make us love our friends better and feel more keenly for the whole of this life the loss of our former delightful intercourse with them, and yet at the same time it so spiritualizes and elevates our minds as to cheer us amidst all our sorrows; and enabling us, on these as on other occasions, to walk by faith and live by the Spirit, it raises us to the level of our ascended friends, till we hear almost their

[9] Diary.

first song of exultation, and would not even wish to interrupt it, while we rather indulge the humble hope of one day joining in the chorus.

"Yet the loss of so excellent a man as Bowdler, at what seemed to us so premature a period, when we might have hoped that for so many succeeding years the world would be instructed by his wisdom, and charmed by his eloquence, and above all, edified and improved by his example, must be deeply felt by the survivors. And even in the case of Mr. Henry Thornton, I at least may naturally feel this who was of the same age; much it might be hoped still remained for him to do for the benefit of his fellow-creatures and the glory of God. And Buchanan too! but, I am silent, . . ."

Another characteristic effect of these various scenes of sorrow appears in a note to Mr. Stephen.

"My dear Stephen,

I have received a new packet from Hayti, giving an account of a spy of Malouet's[10] having been seized, and of his having been treated much better than he deserved. You will see that every effort is used to animate the people. You will see also a manifest hope of interesting England.

"The sad event which has just taken place impresses on me the lesson, Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. I am unspeakably shocked by the consciousness of having wasted

[10] French minister for the colonies.

time and opportunities which never can return. Farewell.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

In this spirit he set at once steadily to work. Much important business was pressing for despatch; above all, the Abolition question required all his time and thoughts. "I have this day sent to Stephen," he writes, Jan. 27th, to Mr. Macaulay, "and desired him to put into your hands after having read it, a most interesting letter from Sismondi. As there are shades at least of difference in the colour of Stephen's opinions, and yours, and mine, on some of the topics touched on by Sismondi, we should compare notes before he is answered. I will write at once to assure him of my having received his letter, and intending to give him a more detailed answer before long. You, I, William Smith, and Stephen, should make up our minds on the important points to which he draws our attention; particularly the actual consequences of the Abolition in our West Indies, since 1807. I agree entirely in your solution of the problem concerning W. Converts to our cause are not able *induere se*, (so to speak,) with all the apparatus of facts, arguments, inferences, &c. which an Abolitionist, of considerable standing, has been insensibly contracting, and which have become a part of his mental atmosphere through which every other object is viewed."

It was the general question of the effects of Abolition, which was soon to engross his attention.

The Abolition party were upon the eve of taking an important step in their great struggle. Their objects had been all along most strictly practical; they contended for no abstract principles; they did not enforce the natural rights of man; but they saw a great system of iniquity and wrong, which called aloud to Heaven for some redressor. The Abolition of the Slave Trade was the first remedy for all this evil. This would staunch the wounds of Africa; save the present victims of the Trade; and insure, as it was hoped, the kind and Christian treatment of the actual stock of labourers. Seven years had passed away, and there was no visible improvement in the West. During all this time they had been anxiously watching for a change of system in the negro's treatment, and seeking to promote it by all private and inoffensive means. When a case of great oppression was committed to Mr. Wilberforce in 1811, "a private remonstrance," says Mr. Brougham, "would, in my humble opinion, be the most advisable course; they make such work about doing things by private communications."

Some of his more eager partisans would scarcely be confined within these prudent limits. "These, my dear Wilberforce, are troublesome and wearisome things," Mr. Stephen had complained four years before. "I am quite, quite sick of the West Indies as a field of labour in our cause; especially when that Augean stable is to be cleansed with a government muck-fork. There is satisfaction in speaking to the public; the sympathies of congenial

minds, the indignation of honest hearts, may be moved, and much solid ground in public opinion may be gained; but to load the shelves of a minister with laboured memorials, to haunt him with conferences for years, and at last to be turned round by the whisper that a governor stands well with great men, and must not have his toes trod upon, is beyond all patience; at least beyond mine. If it prove otherwise, it is not because either philanthropy, or a stronger principle with me (hatred of injustice and oppression) excite, but because duty to God will constrain me while I still hope to do Him service. I sometimes feel like St. Paul; I do this thing not willingly, but of necessity; a dispensation of negroism is committed to me, and woe is me if I do not work for them.

"After all I have said, let me be just to Perceval. I have not yet complained to him. It is because the work is very delicate, because I have not time to prepare for it to my own satisfaction, and because (what is most vexatious) I am never refused any thing at the Colonial Office. All is fair, and all is smooth, all promises well and better; and yet nothing effectual is done, and something always done or permitted to thwart my best founded hopes. Of what use will the Register Act be, even if approved by the council, without a judge to execute it, and while contumacy to government itself is tolerated, when opposed to right principles in the colonies?

P. S. (added the next morning.) "I am ashamed of my grumbling spirit, but you must even take my

effusions as they are, as I have no time for revision. How do our views and feelings disguise facts to our own deception! It is not true that no good has been done even at the Secretary's office. If it were as easy to do good as it is pleasant when the end is gained, where would be the merit, or must I say to you, the force of the evidence? Certain however it is that without a humble hope of God's approbation, or at least a sense of duty to Him, men would soon be as weary as Sisyphus at attempting to do good in this bad world; and I think I have known some of the worst and most unfeeling characters partly formed by the frustration of benignant efforts, which their amiable but godless motives had not strength to persevere in under the pain of disappointment. So let us look to God and find room even for the Hottentots.

"I really think however that we shall do nothing effectual to check colonial crimes till we blazen them to the English public, and arm ourselves with popular indignation."

Even now Mr. Wilberforce would not listen to these more violent counsels. "You," he tells Mr. Stephen, "are full ten degrees above me." He was resolved in the first instance to strengthen the ameliorating influence of the Act of Abolition, by preventing the illicit introduction of fresh labourers. Thus the Bill for a Register of Negroes was the first move in this new conflict; and yet in this mildest and most necessary step, the principle of all his later conduct was in

fact involved. For it was in truth the appeal of the slave population from the narrow-minded island legistures to the supreme council of the empire; from the corrupted currents of Jamaica and Barbadoes to English sympathy and moral feeling. It led therefore to every after-effort for the mitigation of their sufferings; and when all these had been tried in vain, it led step by step to the great principle of entire emancipation. But he and others around him saw not as yet to what they should be led. They had never acted upon the claim of abstract rights; and they reached emancipation at last only because it was the necessary conclusion of a series of practical improvements. "They looked," says Mr. Stephen, "to an emancipation of which not the slaves, but the masters themselves should be the willing authors."

The first steps of this transition may easily be traced in the short entries of Mr. Wilberforce's Diary. It was even at its opening a stormy course; every step was to be secured by fighting for it. But his first cares at this moment were from a different quarter. "Thorpe," he says, Feb. 11th,[11] "has published a pamphlet[12] addressed to me, comprising all that —— has given him of the old stuff about Sierra Leone. Poor dear Henry was well qualified to explain and justify all. But it is quite providential (how I abhor that word, fortunate; as if things happened by chance!) that the inquiry took place last winter, and Thorpe himself was ex-

[11] Diary.

[12] "Reasons for establishing a Register of Slaves," the manifesto of his party on this subject.

amined. 15th. Meeting on West India conduct at the Duke of Gloucester's—long discussion—Lords Grenville and Lansdown there, Babington, James Stephen, sen. and jun., and Harrison. Resolved on pushing Registry Bill immediately, and on noticing Thorpe's pamphlet, which is doing harm in France—telling them, though most falsely, that we are trying to establish a slave cultivation of tropical produce in Africa. Agreed to contradict it in House. 22nd. Suffolk Street Committee at eleven on Thorpe's pamphlet—where till near three—when saw Lord Bathurst and Liverpool about Register Bill. Latter rather adverse—kept long. House. Corn Law—interesting debate. Whitbread clever—pressed moderation, abstinence from panic, and against all interference, as useless. 23rd. Horner mentioned Thorpe's pamphlet in the House—it makes much noise I hear. House on Corn again till near four. 26th. Sunday. Could not help thinking of Thorpe's pamphlet in the night when half asleep. I thank God it has not molested me to-day, while better things have occupied me. 28th. A general meeting of the Board on Thorpe's business. Deference for Lord Grenville overcame the disapprobation of four-fifths of the meeting, which for an authoritative contradiction of Thorpe's publication, referring to subsequent detailed examination in the Annual Report. By Grenville's recommendation adopted a sample of a few, by no means the strongest misstatements, without any summary sentence to enforce the conclusion. Sad work for the cause in foreign countries; France

especially. I am sadly grieved for Abolition' sake, and that of justice and truth, at our acting so weak a part in the African Institution.

"March 1st. An interview with Liverpool, Bathurst, and Vansittart, when they told us they could not support the Register Bill for want of proof of actual smuggling of slaves. Dear Stephen" (he sat at this time for a government borough) "wishing to go out of parliament. With difficulty persuaded to wait till Castlereagh comes; when we may ascertain whether we ourselves shall bring in the Bill this year. 5th. Castlereagh returned yesterday. Public discontent running high, Corn Bill causâ. 6th. House. Corn Bill in committee —sad rioting at night. Both doors of the carriage, which set down members, opened, and member pulled out. None much injured. 8th. Called on Castlereagh by appointment to hear his narrative of Vienna proceedings on Abolition. I believe all done that could be done. Much pressed to speak on Corn Bill; and told Huskisson I would, if government would support the Register Bill. It would not be right to change my opinion; but one may fairly take a more or less forward part from considerations of expendiency. House—Report of Corn Bill, and tendency to riot. 9th. House. Some mobbing, and people savage and inveterate—alas! alas!* Charles Grant, and Mr. Arthur Young the agriculturist, slept with us for security on Tuesday." Mr. Young was now entirely blind, and found his chief pleasure in such society as that which he continually found in Mr. Wilberforce's house. "He says that in his present state of Egyptian

darkness, Kensington Gore is still like the land of Goshen to him; and that while he has the hope of hearing Mr. Wilberforce's voice, he will not say that he finds 'in change of place, no change of scene.'" [13]

"At my prayers this morning," his Diary continues, "March 10th, I reflected seriously if it was not my duty to declare my opinions in favour of the Corn Bill, on the principle of providing things honest in the sight of all men, and adorning the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. I decided to do it. I see people wonder I do not speak one way or the other. It will be said, he professes to trust in God's protection, but he would not venture any thing. Then I shall have religious questions and moral questions, to which my speaking will conciliate, and contra, my silence strongly indispose men. Besides, it is only fair to the government, when I really think them right, to say so, as an independent man not liable to the imputation of party bias, corrupt agreement with landed interest, &c.; so I prepared this morning and spoke, and though I lost my notes, and forgot much I meant to say, I gave satisfaction." "I am sure that in coming forward, I performed a very painful act of duty, from a desire to please God, and to serve the interests of religion, and I humbly trust God will protect me and my house and family. If not, His will be done." "Sir Joseph Banks's house sadly treated; all his papers burnt, and his house nearly being so."

A letter to his eldest son now seventeen years old, enters into more particulars.

[13] Letter from a friend of Mr. Arthur Young's.

"London, March 15, 1815.

"My very dear W.

I do not recollect with any precision when I last wrote to you, but my feelings have been for some days intimating to me that it is long, too long, since we either of us heard from the other, and therefore I gladly avail myself of a leisure half hour, which I enjoy in consequence of Mr. Whitbread's, or rather of Lord Castlereagh's, business being put off, to despatch a letter to Aspeden.

"You did not mention, I think, the subject of your declamation—I wish you had, and shall be glad if you will name it in your next letter to me or your mother. What are the speculations of the Aspeden politicians on the escape of Buonaparte? We old hands are, if we would confess it, as much at a loss as you what predictions to utter. In short, I for one have learnt from experience to be very diffident in my speculations on future events. It is however an unspeakable comfort in such circumstances to be assured that able, and active, and wicked as Buonaparte is, he is no less under the Divine control than the weakest of human beings. He is executing, unconsciously, the Divine will; and it is probably because the sufferings which he before brought upon the nations of Europe did not produce the intended effect of humiliation and reformation, that he is allowed once more to stalk abroad and increase the sum of human misery.

"Were you to enter the dining-room at family prayer time without having received some explanation of our appearance, you would probably begin

to think that we were expecting a visit from the ex-emperor and his followers at Kensington Gore, and had prepared a military force to repel his assault. For you would see four soldiers and a sergeant, together with another stranger,[14] who as far as bodily strength would go, would play his part as well as any of them. The fact is, that we had some reason to apprehend mischief for our house, in consequence of the part which I judged it my duty to take on the Corn Bill; and as your mother, &c. was advised to evacuate the place, I preferred the expedient which had been adopted by Mr. Bankes, and several others of my friends, that of having four or five soldiers in my house—the very knowledge of their being there, rendering an attack improbable. But it was a curious instance of the rapid circulation of intelligence, that at Covent Garden market early on Saturday morning, John Sharman, who sells garden-stuff, being there to purchase for the supply of his shop was hooted after, with 'So your old master has spoken for the Corn Bill,' (I had spoken only the night before,) 'but his house shall pay for it.' All however is hitherto quiet, and I trust will continue so. But I was aware of the danger when (to you I may say, it was at my prayers) I resolved to speak for the Bill; but I judged it my duty to show that I was in favour of the measure (though thinking 76*s.* a preferable importation price to 80*s.*). I thought that if I remained silent, many might say Mr. Wilberforce professes to trust in the protection of God, but you see when there is danger to be apprehended from speak-

[14] Bushel the Peace-officer.

ing out, he takes care to protect himself by being silent. Again, I sometimes need parliamentary support for measures of a class not so popular as some others, as missionary questions, or any others of a religious kind. Now by coming forward and speaking my mind on the present occasion, I knew I should render people better disposed to support me in any of these cases, while on the other hand my remaining silent and snug as it might have been termed, would have produced a contrary disposition. I acted in short on the principle of 'providing things honest in the sight of all men, and of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.' But observe, I was clear in my judgment in favour of the Bill.

"I did not intend to give you this long history. And as I have expended all my own time, and have trespassed on yours, I must hasten to a conclusion, not however without a few words to assure my dear —— how often I think of him, how often pray for him. O my dearest boy, let me earnestly conjure you not to be seduced into neglecting, curtailing, or hurrying over your morning prayers. Of all things guard against neglecting God in the closet. There is nothing more fatal to the life and power of religion; nothing which makes God more certainly withdraw His grace. Farewell, my beloved ——, my first-born: and O my dearest boy, bear in mind what a source either of joy or sorrow you will be to your affectionate mother, and

Your affectionate Father and Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Kind remembrances to any young friends I know."

His Journal continues on the 14th of March; "All quite quiet here, but sad accounts from France; Buonaparte having got to Lyons, and Horner anticipating the worst. The soldiers (Scotch) behave extremely well; they come in to prayers, and pleased to do so. 15th. Stephen decided to give up his seat in parliament; government not supporting the Register Bill. His integrity is great. I believe after what he has stated, he can act no otherwise." He came reluctantly to this conviction; after having for some time delayed his friend's decision. Mr. Stephen lived for this great cause, and often could scarcely tolerate the indifference of his friends in the administration. "If Lord Castlereagh fails to redeem this pledge," he had declared in the preceding year with the vehemence his generous temper dictated, "may God not spare me, if I spare the noble Lord and his colleagues." [15] In the House Mr. Stephen was a great loss; but his energies expanded when they were freed from the shackles of official life, and his vigorous and copious pen produced, within this year, four pamphlets on the subject of the Slave Trade.

Mr. Wilberforce's language with the government, though calmer was not less explicit than his friend's.

"(Private.) [16] Kensington Gore, March 17, 1815.

"My dear Lord Liverpool,

Were the subject of my letter of less urgent importance, I would not intrude on you with it at a

[15] June 28.

[16] From a rough copy among Mr. Wilberforce's papers.

moment like the present, when the mind of every man who feels for his country is pressed upon, and when you, who have to bear the weight of all, must have an overpowering burthen to sustain. But I was about to write to your Lordship before the news from France arrived, and the relation which my business has to Mr. Stephen's measures compels me to take up my pen without further delay.

"I can truly assure you that your decision against the Register Bill, has not only grieved me in consequence of the various evils with which I saw but too plainly that determination was pregnant to Africa and the black and coloured population of the West Indies, but also on account of its sowing the seeds of disunion between myself and your Lordship's government, to which I have been the more cordially attached from my personal good opinion of yourself and some of your colleagues. For it is not merely this measure of the Register Bill that is in question. But the same consideration which leads you to decide against its adoption, would still more clearly prompt you to decide against a bill to attach slaves to the soil; indeed against all measures which should be brought forward for mitigating the sufferings and improving the condition of the slaves and the free coloured population of the West Indies; though our having left their grievances unredressed has been so long the reproach of this country throughout Europe, though Mr. Burke had prepared a plan of reform, and though the late Lord Melville avowed his plan for gradual emancipation,

and this idea of interfering with their legislative rights was never deemed a sufficient obstacle in the way of such reformation. Now, that sooner or later we shall succeed, you can I think have no doubt, if you consider the great yet increasing number of the people of Great Britain who are governed by religious principle in the great concerns of life where neither direct interest or passions lead them astray, and reflect that nineteen out of twenty of these will infallibly become our friends. I am persuaded your Lordship has no adequate idea of the real condition of the poor creatures I have been referring to. And that which I own shocks me in the extreme is, that, in Jamaica especially, all efforts which are made for enlightening these wretched beings with the blessed truths of Christianity, which might compensate their temporal sufferings, are obstinately and warmly opposed. How shocking is this! And I insist on it, because I firmly believe and confidently trust that your Lordship will feel the force of this appeal, and be shocked by the very idea of setting yourself and your government in direct array against the progress of Divine truth, no less than against that of human happiness. But there is also another consideration which I own has no little weight in my estimation.

"The black population of Hayti I am assured is all taught to read, and we cannot doubt of its reading with deep interest all that is said and written against the system of slavery from which they have recently escaped, and to which, as they conceive, it is the object of France again to subject them. Now, can it be but that when they read the accounts we shall

be compelled to make public . . if we can no otherwise produce a discontinuance of these evils or the gradual introduction of a sanative and meliorating principle . . they will be strongly moved by them, and probably be urged to knock off by force those fetters which the British legislature will not consent to render less galling? Your Lordship however has no time to spare; I will therefore detain you no longer. Only let me conjure you to consider seriously the nature and direction of the path into which you are entering. No human being knows of my writing this letter; but I could not be easy without pouring forth a few of the painful considerations which for some time have been distressing my feelings.

"It really would, on all accounts, grieve me to find myself opposed to your Lordship's government on these great questions of the deepest interest to every man of religion as well as humanity. Hitherto I have abstained from bringing into notice the miseries of the black population, and I would still abstain, if without divulging them they might gradually be removed; but life is wearing away, and I should indeed be sorry if mine were to terminate before at least a foundation had been laid of a system of reformation, which I verily believe would scarcely be more for the comfort of the slaves and free coloured population than it would be for the ultimate security of the West India colonies themselves. I remain, with real respect and regard, my dear Lord Liverpool,

Your Lordship's very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"To the Earl of Liverpool, &c. &c. &c."

His life was not to close until the very top-stone of this work of reformation has been brought forth with shouting; but its foundations were now laid in heaviness, and for many patient, persevering years its walls and buttresses seemed scarcely to advance.

On the 17th his Diary proceeds, "Stephen summoned me to town on his affair—so went—and on the whole for his giving up his seat. All we fear over in France. Alas! All the army false—sad work—and the King said to be fled to Belgium. 20th. To town to confer with Lord Liverpool about Register Bill business—he just mentioned Stephen's business, but afterwards showed he felt more than he said. I was afraid of meddling with it. Soldiers left us on Saturday, (18th,)—London quite quiet ever after. 25th. How wonderful are these political changes! yet it is curious that we have now grown quite used to Buonaparte on the throne again. It is a compensation to me that the Roman Catholic religion is stunted and injured by the change. 27th. Stephen had received from Vansittart, (Chancellor of Exchequer,) a kind query, and wish for his pausing—present altered circumstances not requiring his surrender of his seat on his own principles, and the times and circumstances of the country claiming every man's service—I doubtful—he very honest, and desirous of pleasing God, and resolving on the whole to adhere to his decision." "I have decided finally," were Mr. Stephen's words, "on the side of perseverance. The verdict of my own conscience was upon the whole that I should retire. It was a truly painful victory over very power-

ful feelings. I pray God to accept it as a sacrifice, and to bless the event. I wrote to-day a long letter to Sir W. Scott, announcing that final decision."

"Called about the slave traders pitied by Dr. Thorpe; a mere point of law. The tribunal incompetent from want of a pirate's commission, and the pro tempore judge (not a professional man) misled by following precisely Thorpe's precedent of a former year. It is certainly curious, and furnishes an apparent triumph to Thorpe, that they should be acquitted. It is a lesson not to expect to escape unjust calumnies, and temporary suffering from their prevalence; not only is Macaulay not justly censurable on the grounds stated by Thorpe, but his merits are of the highest order. 30th. Dined Grant's to meet Mackintosh, who very entertaining—speaking highly of Hall—entertainingly of France, Waverley, &c. How wonderful the change in France; yet what more natural than that an army should pull down and set up sovereigns, and that a vain-glorious nation should admire and be attached to a great warrior, who has extended the bounds and augmented the glory of France, rather than a peaceable king to whom they are long unaccustomed! Mackintosh thinks the French government had many warnings. But then government so often warned, and told the wolf coming, that when he does come it is unprepared. . . Joseph in Switzerland getting money. . . Madame de Stael was in two or three days to have received two million livres, a deposit of her father's, when Blacas, who was to have accompanied her to the French minister, wrote to her that from imperious

circumstances all payments stopped. She for a few days lost her head and drove about wildly. Afterwards returned to Copet. French society Mackintosh says very agreeable. Dine at six—dinner very short —then coffee, and go to various houses. Mr. H. described them from six months' observation as fond of reading; but on pressing it seemed only the gazettes, (hired) on hired chairs in the public gardens at Paris. He described them as void of all principle. Their opera, &c. How little can this be a fit recreation for those who are bound by their profession as Christians to mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts! General Macaulay states that almost all the French he saw were friendly to Napoleon and adverse to the Bourbons. Mr. S. a man of good parts . . of the middle class and probably so in his connexions . . tells me that he was told by all his French acquaintance, 'We were a great empire under Buonaparte, now we are a little kingdom.' For my own part I cannot but feel it a strong objection to supporting the Bourbons, that they are such firm Roman Catholics. And now Buonaparte seems courting the friends of liberty, and Carnot being his minister of the interior is perhaps deceived too: this must make him a much more formidable enemy.

"April 1st. Spurzheim the craniologist in London, and people talking about his system; L. full of it. Ministers are disposed for war; saying the Allies will have 700,000 men, and he be unprepared; whereas if you wait he will be becoming stronger and better equipped, especially with the ma-

teriel of war, and you and the Allies less compacted: we however are so exhausted that we cannot afford to pay all the forces. Our foreign expedition last year cost above thirty millions sterling. An affecting visit from Mrs. B. the wife of an attorney of respectable station and character, near thirty years in Leeds, convicted of forgery of stamps on deeds, (vitiating securities,) and to be hanged this day week. Poor thing! I gave her no hopes, and wrote to his friend at Leeds to tell him plainly that no hope of pardon; till that be clear they never will look eternity in the face. Alas, may not our bloody laws send many unprepared into another world from this very cause? I once saw a poor wretch whom nothing would persuade he should not through his friends obtain a pardon, whereas I knew about ten at night that he was to be hanged early the next morning. 7th. Suffolk Street about Thorpe's pamphlet. House—Lord Castlereagh's address preparatory to discussion about Buonaparte's escape, and the measures to be pursued. Address ambiguous, but Castlereagh's speech tending to war. Liverpool rather pacific. 8th. To Duke of Gloucester on Register Bill—Lords Grey and Lansdown. Then Suffolk Street. Then Kensington Gore. Spurzheim dined—much talk. What an awful interval now: when all Europe collecting troops against Buonaparte. 700,000 mentioned by Lord Liverpool."

In the midst of all this daily business, encountered with the utmost diligence, comes in the result of a Sunday's self-examination. "April 10th. I humbly

hope that I enjoyed yesterday more of a Christian feeling of faith, and hope, and love, than of late. But I have been to blame in point of hours. Lord, forgive my past unprofitableness, and enable me to mend in future. I really wished to give more time and pains to the Report than Macaulay has allowed me. This very morning I meant to have given to it, but he had taken it away with him; but I am conscious I grow incompetent, and if my infirmities, as is natural, increase, while my talents and powers decline, I must go off extremely in efficiency. Let me only, however, try to please God, and do my best, and He will, I doubt not, bless me as He has done hitherto in a marvellous degree. 13th. House on Civil List. Left them (about eleven) differing about the committee's calling for oral testimony—a point of honour and interest to the minister; they must fight their master's battles, as well as former ministers have fought theirs. 21st. Being unwell, I kept the house, but busy on letters, and chiefly African Institution Report; and occupied evening. Committee on Lascars' business called just when dinner going on table. I too faint, and, alas, impatient, forgetting Christ's talking with the woman of Samaria, and neglecting the solicitations of hunger, and the distress of faintness. Sunday, 23rd. I have been neglecting general politics, and am sadly behindhand in my ponderings on them, without having done adequate good elsewhere. O let me learn hence, 1. To guard against procrastination. 2. Whatever my hand findeth to do, to do it with vigour. 3. To humble myself deeply for my sad un-

profitableness. How little do I deserve the character, which the good providence of God, and the uncommon kindness of uncommon friends, has preserved for me! I can only hide my face in the dust, and be speechless. Yet let me try to amend, and be active and efficient to the utmost of my remaining faculties. My judgment hesitates as to the political line I should adopt; but on this blessed day, let my motto ever be, and I bless God I am enabled pretty well to make my practice accord with it, (so far at least as public affairs and private business are concerned,) acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace. 27th. House—Whitbread's motion, that a particular family no bar to treaty for peace. I spoke ill, because indecisively, as indeed I felt in one sense; for my own judgment would be for treating with Buonaparte if we were free: but we are so connected with the Allies, that we could not honestly separate from them, as agreeing to Whitbread's motion would substantially have been. Tierney very coarse and caustic. Whitbread ill-natured about my ingratitude for Abolition services. I could not reply, and better I should not; for alas, I was angry.

"May 3rd. Anniversary of Bible Society. It went off well. Robert Grant spoke beautifully. I was well received, but very moderate in real performance. As I came out, a truly pleasing Quaker accosted me, and with the true *friends*' frankness and kindness, without any thing of forwardness and vulgarity, asked me concerning peace or war, 'having been much exercised about conferring with me' on that topic, wishing me

'to become a fool that I might be wise,' &c. I walked with him some time, and was affected to tears. 6th. Dined at Lord Liverpool's, a large and mixed party—their notions about churches all outside work. 10th. Early to see Lord's Castlereagh and Liverpool about Abolition and St. Domingo. Castlereagh clear that the Bourbon government will never revive the Trade. I hear every where that the Duke of Wellington is in high spirits. I am distressed and puzzled about politics; but surely without being clear it would not be right to oppose the government. If Buonaparte could be unhorsed, it would, humanly speaking, be a blessing to the European world; indeed to all nations. And government ought to know both his force and their own. Yet I greatly dread their being deceived, remembering how Pitt was. 13th. To Lambeth—public day—large party—Lord Camden, &c. Before parting, Archbishop speaking of my singing God save the King at Sons of Clergy dinner, the Bishop of Exeter said, he had heard that I was famed for the selection of my songs. 'Take care,' said the Archbishop in a very gentlemanly, episcopal, reproving way, 'my Lord, lest you show yourself too knowing.' All this time a fearful interval, expecting the bursting out of the war. It is amazing how little people seem moved. Generally, I think, for war; especially all who used to be friends of Pitt's government. 24th. Dined Sir T. Acland's, to meet Walter Scott, Planta, jun.—a highly pleasing man—Inglis, and others. Scott very unaffected and pleasing; some very clever colloquial hits. 26th. Reading de-

bates this evening—Grattan's brilliant speech, interesting the understanding, not affecting the passions. 29th. Wordsworth the poet breakfasted with us, and walked garden—and it being the first time, staid long—much pleased with him.

"June 1st. A report to-day from Brussels that it is still said there will be no fighting; Buonaparte will retire—surely there is no ground for this idea. 7th. House. Notice about Register Bill. 3rd. Duke of Gloucester's on Registry Bill—Lords Grenville and Lansdown, Romilly, Calthorpe, Horner, William Smith, Stephen, Babington, and Macaulay. I against bringing on the measure this year. But Grenville strongly for it, and all the rest gave way. 9th. Letter-writing. First quiet thought of the plan of my speech for Tuesday. Then African Institution, Captured Negroes' committee. Then House. Dined Sir G. Beaumont's to meet Wordsworth, who very manly, sensible, and full of knowledge, but independent almost to rudeness. 12th. Off early to Stephen's, Chelsea, to prepare for motion; any quiet time here being next to impossible. 13th. Busy preparing all morning; but not having settled plan of speech before, much less finishings, I felt no confidence. Got through pretty well, speaking an hour and fifty minutes."

Sunday, the 18th, was spent at the parsonage of Taplow, where his family had been staying for a week. It is described in his Diary "as a quiet day." Above measure did he enjoy its quietness. He seemed to shake off with delight the dust and bustle of the

crowded city; and as he walked up the rising street of the village on his way to the old church of Taplow, he called on all around to rejoice with him in the visible goodness of his God; and "perhaps," he said to his children, "at this very moment when we are walking thus in peace together to the house of God, our brave fellows may be fighting hard in Belgium. Oh how grateful should we be for all God's goodness to us!" The next day he "returned to London for Lord Roseberry's Divorce Bill, religionis causâ;" and almost the first news which met him showed that his grateful reflections on the Sunday had been uttered whilst the battle of Waterloo was being fought. 22nd. Dr. Wellesley came and told us of the Duke of Wellington's splendid victory of the 18th." "A dreadful battle," he writes word to Taplow. "British victorious; but great loss. Duke of Brunswick and Lord Errol's eldest son killed. We are said to have lost 25,000, the French 50,000. Oh my heart sickens at the scene! Yet praise God for this wonderful victory."

On Saturday, the 24th, he again plunged into the country, but hastened back upon the Monday, for "the Duke of Wellington's reward; I preferring infinitely a palace to be built, to buying one ready made. 28th. Breakfasters again—Sanders, a black man — Spanish, Blanco White; yesterday Prince Blucher's aide-de-camp who had brought the despatches—desired by Blucher several times over to let me know all that passed." "Did Marshal Blucher," he was asked at his audience by the Regent,

"give you any other charge." "Yes, sir, he charged me to acquaint Mr. Wilberforce with all that had passed." "Go to him then yourself by all means," was the Prince's answer, "you will be delighted with him." The veteran soldier's lively recollection of the efforts made in the preceding year to succour his afflicted countrymen, is highly to his honour. "I have fought," he wrote to the managing committee, "two pitched battles, five engagements, masked three fortresses, taken two; but I have lost 22,000 men. Will the people of England be satisfied with me now? Desire Mr. Wilberforce to bestir himself." Though he had lately lamented his forgetfulness, and begged a friend "to act always as his flapper," he needed in truth no such assistance. He took at this time the leading part in another meeting for the Germans, and in the midst of his busiest preparations for the introduction of his Registry Bill he "came back and took the chair at a private meeting of the neighbours for a fund, raising for the widows and children of the killed and wounded of the 1st Life Guards always quartered at Knightsbridge—a small meeting, but cordial."

A grateful remembrance of the gallant services of our soldiers and our sailors was deeply wrought into his mind, and appeared often in his conversation; as when he said to a friend, "I never see a soldier or a sailor without a mingled feeling of gratitude and compassion. I think of the privations they suffer, and of the dangers, moral as well as physical, to which they are exposed in our defence, while we are comfortably at home by our fire-sides,

enjoying freely our domestic blessings and our Christian advantages." Or when at another time the conversation turned upon the beauties of our English villas. "I must speak," he said, "of the comfort and security of English cottages. It is delightful to think how many there are in this country who though having no title to personal security from the extent or importance of their possessions, are so completely guarded in their little nooks and tenements by the power of the law, that they can enjoy undisturbed every comfort of life as securely as the first peer in the land. I delight to see, as one sometimes does, an old worn-out sailor—poor fellow! seated in his queer boat-like summer-house, smoking his pipe, and enjoying himself in a state of the most happy independence."

The session was now drawing to a close. On the 5th of July the Registry Bill was introduced by Mr. Wilberforce, and read a first time. It had for some time been determined to carry it no further till another session. West Indian hostility was rising mightily against it, and further efforts would at this moment have been premature and dangerous. "I am assured," he tells Mr. Macaulay, "that they are mustering all their forces and all their natural allies against us, with the most assiduous diligence and systematic array. The Bristol merchants are joining the general body of our opponents. Remember that we were challenged to prove in a committee the truth of our allegations, that slaves are smuggled, and also that the abuses we charge do really exist. Do consider about getting evidence from the West Indies

against the next session. If we could get the leading particulars of our allegations concerning the state of the slaves established by positive testimony, the effect depend on it would be considerable." A tragical event marked painfully the conclusion of the session. On the 6th, and more fully on the 7th, he was "shocked to hear of Whitbread's death—having destroyed himself. It must have been insanity, as the jury immediately found it. Oh how little are we duly thankful for being kept from such catastrophes! Doubtless the devil's instigation." "The newspapers," he writes on the same day to Zachary Macaulay, "will state to you the dreadful end of poor Whitbread. I need not say how much the event has shocked me. There can be no doubt of insanity having been the cause, and from what is said the impulse must have been sudden. Are not such acts most probably to be referred to the evil spirit's operation?" He found some slight alleviation of these painful feelings, in bearing witness on the 11th, when a new writ for Bedford town was moved for, "in a few words which I found pleased his friends," to the thoroughly English character of this rugged but manly statesman.

A few days later he writes to Hannah More.

"Near London, July 19, 1815.

"My dear Friend,

I cannot tell how it has hurt me to hear that you had been throwing out a plaint of never hearing from me, in such a way as to indicate the wounding

of the friendly heart from which it came. If I had written to you as often as I have thought of you, I can truly say you would have had no more frequent correspondent. But alas, my friend, think of my situation. Truly I may say with Falstaff, though I trust with some difference, (I feel however as if I were guilty of Falstaff's selfishness in making the remark,) Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. Men! aye, and women too. For it is not twenty-four hours since a young female of twenty came into my library, whose first words when we were alone were, 'I have run away, Mr. Wilberforce.' And a long piece of business have I had with this young fugitive whose companion however I am assured is of her own sex —her maid-servant. But the truth is, I have been and still am in a continual state of struggling to prevent my sinking into an abyss of unanswered letters, unread papers, unfinished business. I am like a man hunted on all sides by his creditors, and striving in vain to stop the growing accumulation, if not to pay off the old arrears. Pity me therefore, my good friend, instead of blaming me—take my part rather—defend me against myself—put me again into good humour with myself.

"I have been for some time about to state to you that I was coming with W. and a young friend of his into your neighbourhood for a tour, and that I certainly could not resist the attraction of Barley Wood. I am just now trying to wind up matters, in order to enable me to quit this place; but new claims are continually recurring. Let me not

however run off again into the same lamentation. What events have we witnessed both in public and private life! Poor Whitbread, what a close, alas! He was certainly however deranged. But oh, how does all enforce on us the important truth that we must acquaint ourselves with God to be at peace! Hoping ere long to see you, I will not now enlarge. Farewell, my dear friend, believe me,

Ever yours sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Though travelling was "beyond measure gratifying" to him, this was the first excursion of the kind which he had made for five-and-thirty years. Its chief features may be traced in the interesting hints and graphic entries of his Diary and letters. Oxford was one of his first halts, whence he writes on the 25th to his family at Brighton, "I am pretty well today, though I was attacked by one of my little enemies within a quarter of an hour of my entering the inn, (the landlord had never had a flea in his house, I think, for twenty years!) and afterwards seized the delinquent in the very act of hostility, and subjected him to the water ordeal, whence he would have as little chance of escaping by fair means, as the unhappy victims of superstition who used to be disposed of in that way; but an unfortunate oversetting of the bason relieving the petite bête, like Buonaparte fresh from Elba the immediate use he made of liberty was to renew hostilities, which kept me broad awake till between five and six this morning: yet I am pretty

well; travelling suits me admirably. We are going on to see Blenheim immediately." Here "the day" was "delightful, and the park beautiful. The first spectacle gorgeously magnificent, like the Duke of Marlborough at the head of his 100,000 men." Cirencester with its "beautiful church whitewashed, alas!" and Bristol—where he "dined with Prothero, whom alone of the West Indian merchants" he found "for the Register Bill, while all the rest are combining against us with systematic zeal"—passed him on to Tintern Abbey and the Wye. Barley Wood was not forgotten; reaching it upon the 3rd of August he was "most kindly welcomed," cheered with "much talk," and "greatly interested by hearing some of Patty's materials for Hannah's Life, who, to my surprise, just seventy. It is surprising how mind supports itself in them against body." On the 4th he "left them as at all other times unwillingly," and spent a quiet Sunday at Dunster, more to his mind than another which soon followed, on which he complains that "a grand dinner, even though with betterish sort of people, is upon Sunday quite out of concert pitch." Hence he plunged into the beauties and solitudes of northern Devonshire; crossing "Porlock Hill," with its "wild deer all over, to the beautiful opening into Linton Vale, and the romantic valley of Rocks." Here he enjoyed "a delightful summer's day," on which (Aug. 9th) "he wrote letters, morning, and followed the rest about three to the brink of the two little rivers, and dined in a most romantic valley. At C. my name being mentioned the bells

set a ringing, and the people would take nothing, insisting on my services years ago—Abolition I believe."

His tour lasted for another fortnight, bringing him by the 26th of August to his family at Brighton, "where blessed be God found all well, after an absence of five weeks and a day." His birth-day had just passed under a friend's hospitable roof. "I hoped as well as wished to get much time for private devotions on this important and most humiliating day, but partly through my own fault, partly through dear W.'s keeping me in his room, I had very little. Yet I hope the season has not elapsed without serious reflection; and as iron sharpeneth iron, oh may my spirit be incited by the good men here. W.'s little one, my godchild, received into the church. Dear W. all Christian fervour and love, but rather too fanciful; yet oh how far removed from the excesses of our dear ——s! There it is self-conceit operating through the medium of religious doctrines. If even knowledge puffeth up, how much more self-sufficiency! I am tempted to waste time in W.'s library—an immense variety, especially of old divinity." [17]

He was now fixed at Brighton, "a place," he tells Lord Teignmouth, "at which you have so often been, that I need scarcely explain why it appears to me so like Piccadilly by the sea-side. And yet so situated, when I can forget that there are at this season of the year woods that wave with all their leafy honours, I can delight in the fresh breeze from the sea, and in

[17] Diary Aug. 21.

the varied forms of the beautiful and sublime, which this single object exhibits. Again, coming down to this, a strange place, I find an excellent house and every other comfort, with security and peace, free from all fears of evil as well as from all actual molestation. What a highly favoured country is ours! Though before my late tour I knew, almost as well as I now do, that to the very extremities of our body geographical, or national, (shall I term it?) the circulation was vigorous, and the action in every part complete; yet I have a far more vivid impression of this since I travelled through the most remote recesses of Devonshire, and found every where all the comforts and even luxuries of life; no where in a fuller measure than at a little inn at Clovelly, a place which more than equalled our utmost expectations."

He found "an immense accumulation of letters" waiting his return. "How can I clear away the arrear? Surely it would cost me a month to do it, and is it tanti? Yet courtesy is a Christian duty. My time slides away insensibly, and though I get little done I really have too little air and exercise." Many of these letters were upon important matters, and required much time and thought. Amongst their subjects were the state of religion in Ceylon, the French and Spanish Slave Trade, and the persecutions which were at this time harassing the Protestants of France. The holding public meetings on this subject was warmly pressed upon him; but having ascertained from a correspondence with Lord Liverpool, "that our government had exerted itself with the French

government, and the French government with its subjects,"[18] he advised, with his usual discretion, "that there should be no kindling of the flame here. There would be a danger of rendering the Protestant cause in general, schools and all, unpopular in France, from being connected with England. They would say we were forcing our religion on them; whereas if we let them alone, the bulk, who are indifferents in religion and friends to the charter, would be friendly to the Protestants. But I approve of subscribing for them, guarding against misapplying the money."[19]

His letters were not his only occupation; he was again called to an attendance in the house of mourning. "Even you would be shocked," he writes to Zachary Macaulay, "at such a terrific mass of unanswered letters as environs me, and I am pressed for time, for I have an invalid friend here who, having no other comforter, occupies much of my attention." Besides this friend—a young Cambridge student, over whom he watched with the kindness of a father—the state of Mrs. Henry Thornton claimed much of his attention. It was but too evident that she was following her husband to the grave. "I was extremely shocked by her first appearance," he tells Mr. Macaulay on the 15th of September, "but I really hope she is rather better since her arrival. The weather has been and now is the most unfavourable possible; a cold east wind morning and evening, and an intensely burning sun all day, and a sultry feeling in the air beyond the

[18] Diary. Vid. Correspondence, &c.
[19] Diary.

actual heat. Till I saw her I was sanguine in my hopes; I own I am now greatly alarmed." "I am thankful," he continues on the day following, "to say that the east wind has given place to a genial west wind, and I hope dear Mrs. Henry Thornton will feel the benefit of the change. I am so sure that all the dispensations of Providence towards that family, must be dispensations of love and not of anger; that in my serious moments I can be sure the welfare of the children will be provided for by Him who has emphatically called Himself 'the Father of the fatherless.' But if it be His will, may her valuable life be spared to them." "I fear," he says on the 27th, "I have been misled into too favourable an opinion of Mrs. Thornton's case, and I have touched in conversing with her as strongly as I could on the guardianship of her children in the event of her death. I fear it might be deemed superstitious, but I own the coming forward of such excellent and childless people to execute the trust has appeared to me strikingly ominous of the mother's removal."

The termination of her sufferings was hastening on with the sure but unsuspected progress of rapid pulmonary consumption. "All this time Mrs. H. Thornton gradually declining I fear, though we are doubtful sometimes if she is not getting a little better." On the 3rd, "Macaulay and I were with her reading her a paper for her will—an affecting interview—I could scarcely understand her speaking; she is in a sweet state." On the 11th of October she was "sinking rapidly," and on the morning of the 13th he writes to

Macaulay; "All is over—she died last night at half-past eleven, and so peacefully did our friend depart, that even her children who were all round the bed, and leaning on it, were not sensible of the moment of her expiring. I am not clear I was not myself present." "For several days before her death, I had read and prayed with her, and written to their friends;" and from her dying-bed he went on the last morning of her life to a meeting of the Brighton Auxiliary Bible Society. "When he entered the room," says an eye-witness, "he seemed so pale and fatigued, that his friends feared he would scarcely be able to speak. But he no sooner entered on his subject than his countenance was lighted up, he became animated and impressive."

"Had it not been," he said, "for one painful circumstance, it was not my intention to have been present at this meeting to-day, for I have been compelled to curb the zeal which I always feel to attend on occasions like this, by making it a rule to myself to decline being present at such meetings in places of which I am not a regular inhabitant, that I may not become too obvious and intrusive. But to-day I have broken this rule, for I am just come from a scene in which the value of the book which it is your object to disperse, is displayed as with a sunbeam. I dare not withhold such a testimony as it furnishes to the healing and victorious efficacy of the inspired volume. I am come from a chamber, in which a widowed mother, surrounded by her soon to become orphan family, is enabled to look the last enemy calmly in the face; herself possessing

a peace which even the waves of Jordan cannot ruffle, because it is the gift of God; her children in some degree enabled to anticipate for her the hope of glory. It is a scene which must be witnessed to produce its full effect upon the heart, a scene such as, if I had not myself witnessed, I could not have adequately imagined—a happiness felt in the moments of the deepest outward dejection and sorrow, an elevation above the evils and trials of this mortal life. Trials did I call them? Triumphs let me rather say of the believer's faith. And let me ask, is this consolation in affliction, this hope in death, any thing peculiar to their particular circumstances or temper of mind, any family secret which they alone possess, and from which men in general are excluded? No, sir, it is that which the blessed word of God offers to all who will embrace it; and therefore how could I but come, and congratulate you and this assembly on being permitted to be the honoured instruments of the Almighty, in diffusing such a cordial as this through a dying world? How could I but rejoice in being allowed to join with you in endeavouring to circulate these imperishable blessings?

"It is true indeed, some tears of mortality will fall, when we see a friend descending into the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the mortal frame suffering its last agonies. 'Jesus wept,' and He will allow His people to weep also; He will pardon and pity the tears we shed from human infirmity. But notwithstanding this natural sorrow, it is the blessed privilege of the work in which we are engaged, that

whilst its end is glory to God in the highest, the way by which it conducts us is pleasantness and peace; and it gives us substantial victory over that last enemy, whom, sooner or later, we must all of us individually encounter. For it is not only in the din and confusion of battle that the spirit may be so raised as to brave danger, and not turn away the eye from death when it stares you in the face. This may arise from the mere excitement of the occasion, or from driving away all thought about the consequences of death. But in the cool and silent hours of reflection, a nobler and more genuine courage may be evinced; and in the chamber of sickness, and from the bed of death, the soul, leaning on the word of her God, may meet that enemy without alarm, and calmly say, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

"Never surely," was his private reflection, "was there such a tranquil scene as Mrs. Henry Thornton's death." "I am almost tempted to think I see a present explanation of the mysterious providence by which the mother of these nine orphans has been taken away, when I witness the depth of piety which it has made manifest. It is a fine remark, I think of Bishop Butler's, that though there be no pain nor cause for resignation in heaven, there may be benefits from resignation and other tempers which earthly pain has contributed to produce." In the following week he followed her remains to London, and on the 19th of October attended at her funeral. "Went there with Stephen. How strangely are we

constituted! I have often been more affected by a very trifle."

Business [20] and friends gathered round him before he could again rejoin his family. "The good Dean's old saying," he writes to Brighton on the 20th, "has been already a little verified; that I mean of my drawing a tail to me wherever I may be. C. and dear Lord Teignmouth have been here, and they, and I believe three more, are to dine here at half-past four." "I will use my pen no more," he ends a note written on a following Sunday, "than to express what however I express much more at large on my knees, my earnest wishes that God's best blessings may be ever strewed abundantly upon you all. Oh! how blessed will be that day, when after all our conflicts and anxieties we shall be made partakers of that rest which remaineth for the people of God! Oh let us all strive lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. But if we give diligence to make our calling and election sure, we never shall, we never can fail, for the promises of the God of truth are the pledges of our security. But let us all remember that if we would be admitted hereafter into heaven we must be made meet for it here. That striking passage in the 8th of Romans quite haunts me—'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.' Oh let this thought quicken our endeavours and our prayers."

On the 14th of November he returned to Brighton,

[20] One entry should be saved. "Late up rooting amongst my papers, burning Crebillon, &c."

and to business, for he complains, "I cannot even read during the day all the letters which the morning's post has heaped upon me: twice within the last few days I have had five or six packets beyond my number." "I will give you the precedence," he writes to Mr. Bankes,[21] "over many business correspondents who are clamouring around me, happily in dumb show, for otherwise no dog-kennel would ever give a more dissonant chorus of discordant sounds than my pro tempore study at Brighton. A watering-place is in general parlance so commonly understood as a synonymous term with an idling-place, that an absent friend who knew I was here, might suppose I had no hinderance but indolence to writing to him as often and as largely as he might wish. Yet I assure you I have never been more occupied. While Mrs. Henry Thornton lingered on her dying sofa, (really a sober *triumph* if ever there was one in such a situation,) I was much and frequently with her and her family. And now I have correspondence on important subjects with all the four quarters of the globe. In fact my letters, it is grievous, deeply grievous to say, leave me scarcely any time for reading, which I believe no man loves better than myself—still less for writing, for which also I have a wish."

In the midst of these over-occupations, he perceived with no great pleasure a new feature of resemblance added to "Piccadilly by the sea-side," in the presence of the Prince Regent, and the consequent claims of the court and society upon his straitened

[21] Nov. 27.

time. "I at the Pavilion once. The ministers have been down with the Prince for two or three days each. Lord Sidmouth and Bathurst called on me yesterday. Lord Castlereagh before. The foreign ministers there also. Lord St. Helen's and Carleton here. The Queen here about a week. The Pavilion in Chinese style—beautiful and tasty,"[22] "though it looks," he added, "very much as if St. Paul's had come down to the sea and left behind a litter of cupolas. When there, the Prince and Duke of Clarence too very civil. Prince showed he had read Cobbett. Spoke strongly of the blasphemy of his late papers, and most justly. I was asked again last night, and to-night; but declined, not being well." This excuse however would not long serve, and three days afterwards he was again "at the Pavilion—the Prince came up to me and reminded me of my singing at the Duchess of Devonshire's ball in 1782, of the particular song, and of our then first knowing each other."[23] "We are both I trust much altered since, sir," was his answer. "Yes, the time which has gone by must have made a great alteration in us." "Something better than that too, I trust, sir."[24] "He then asked me to dine with him the next day, assuring me that I should hear nothing in his house to give me pain, . . alluding to a rash expression of one of his train, when I declined the other day—'Mr. Wilberforce will not dine with you, sir;'[25] . . that even if there should be at another time, there should not be when

[22] Diary. [23] Ib. [24] Con. Mem. [25] Ib.

I was there. At dinner I sat between Lord Ellenborough and Sir James Graham. The Prince desired I might be brought forward."[26]

At night in coming away I opened to Bloomfield, very civilly as I am sure I ought, saying I felt the Prince's kindness, but told him that it was inconvenient to me to come to the Pavilion often—children causâ. He at once said, I understand you. When I next saw the Prince, he gave me a kind and general invitation. I heard afterwards that Lord Ellenborough was asked to Pavilion expressly to meet me. I was glad to hear it, as indicating that I was deemed particular as to my company. What misrepresentations of facts! Stephen heard that the Prince's speech to me when inviting me intimated that if I came hereafter I must take my chance; that commonly the talk was such as I should dislike to hear. The direct contrary was the fact." Several times in the ensuing weeks he was again a guest at the Pavilion, and met always with the same treatment. "The Prince is quite the English gentleman at the head of his own table." "I was consulted by the Queen's desire, whether proper to keep the Queen's birth-day which fell on the thanksgiving-day. I replied that not wrong, but rather doubtful. I went myself, being forced to obey the sergeant and summons, otherwise should have deemed it for me ineligible, and therefore wrong; but now went to mark my distinction. The party very large and splendid. The Ladies —— sweetly unaffected and

[26] Diary.

kind—Princess Charlotte still shy—introduced to the bearded Lord P. and found him under that strange exterior very mild and pleasing."

"No, my dear Stephen," he wrote in reply to the playful taunt, "you will live to be a peer at last," "I am not afraid of declaring that I shall go out of the world plain William Wilberforce. In one view indeed I seldom have had less reason to be dissatisfied with that less dignified style: I mean in the degree of civility or even respect to which even plain W. W. may be deemed entitled. For really had I been covered with titles and ribands, I could not have been treated with more real, unaffected, unapparently condescending, and therefore more unostentatious civility. But, alas! still better reasons suggest the same dispositions. I become more and more impressed with the truth of good old Baxter's declaration, that 'the great and the rich of this world are much to be pitied;' and I am continually thankful for not having been led to obtain a station which would have placed my children in circumstances of greatly increased danger."

All this society and the late hours it caused, greatly interfered with his regular employment. "What," he wrote on the day of his last visit to the Pavilion, "what with leave-takings and homage-payings . . the disloyal habits of Chancery Lane,[97] if not second *childishness*, may have rendered even *Masters* forgetful that this is in the Court Calendar the Queen's birth-

[97] The present town residence of his brother Mr. Stephen, a Master in Chancery.

day, . . and episcopal[28] visitations, and interruptions of the οἱ Πολλοί—what with all these, I say, my poor day has been run away with, so that I shall scarce have any time at my own command before I pay my court at the Pavilion. But it is not to-night only; yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that, I have been worried almost as incessantly. This place is to me far more public than London, or rather than Kensington Gore. Oh how thankful I am that my wife is not one of the Pavilion-monger ladies, about to bring out her daughters!" But it was not merely the interruption of his hours. "This Pavilion-going I find," he says, "injurious even to myself; how much more so must it be to young people, especially young handsome women!"

Nor was this a merely passing feeling. On the first Sunday after his return to London, he says, "I am fresh from Brighton, a place much to be avoided in the winter except for some special purposes—wishing to see the Prince, or some other persons, whom one would meet only there. It must be a bad place for the generality of young women; infusing a pleasure-loving, dissipated spirit. How different this from crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, and making no preparation for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof! How ill-suited to the baptismal engagement to resist the pomps and vanities of this wicked world! I find it steals on myself though so advanced in years. And it must do harm to them, for they associate with you freely, yet not

[28] To the Archbishop of York.

confidentially. You never can have a tête-à-tête. This is bad—the very evil of the lawyers' system—familiarity even to coarseness, yet no real cordiality or even frankness except in rare instances."

With him and his meanwhile, the year had closed with thoughts of soberness and prayer. "What a change has a single year and less made in the circle of my acquaintance! Mr. Henry Thornton and his widow, and their excellent young friend and mine, Mr. Bowdler, who was carried off just when he was about to be married to the daughter of another friend. Mrs. Henry Thornton dying at this place, it was my privilege to be much with her in her latter days, and a more peaceful, humble, grateful, hopeful death I cannot conceive. 'I trust,' she said a few days before her decease, 'God is gently leading me to that blessed world which He has prepared for those that love Him.' I thank God we are well. We overflow with blessings."

"Sunday, Dec. 31st. Church morning. After church, we and our six children together—I addressed them all collected, and afterwards solemn prayer. How little likely on the 30th May, 1797, when I married, that we and all our six children (we never had another) should all be living and well! Praise the Lord, O my soul."

CHAPTER XXXI.

JANUARY 1816 TO JULY 1817.

West Indian opposition to Registry Bill—Feelings under abuse—Spanish Abolition—Postponement of Registry—Insurrection in Barbadoes—Speech in parliament—Monk Lewis—Sessional business—Property tax—Poor relief—Earlham—Sister's death—Hustings—West Indian—Distresses of the country—Secret Committee—Illness—Lottery—Diary—Second Report of Secret Committee—Habeas Corpus Suspension Act debate—Spanish Abolition.

THE year 1816 opened with a storm of opposition, well fitted to try the firmness and ascertain the real principles of the proposer of the Negro Registration. "The stream runs most strongly against us. Marryatt's violent and rude publication, Matthison's more fair, and Hibbert's well-timed one, all come out to meet us at the first opening of parliament. But how vast is the influence of government; it is of that only we are afraid! Yet our cause is good, and let us not fear; assuredly God will ultimately vindicate the side of justice and mercy. Marryatt's new pamphlet is extremely bitter against my religious profession, thinking

that nail will drive. Poor fellow! I hope I can bear him no ill will, but allow for, and pity him."[1]

It was comparatively easy to throw aside one or two such attacks, but it became a real trial of his principles when they were daily repeated throughout years of patient perseverance in efforts for the good of others; when scandalous insinuations were multiplied, and every day produced a new set of slanders of such an aggravated kind, that "if they had been true," he told the House of Commons,[2] "nothing but a special Providence could have prevented my being hanged full thirty years ago." Yet he stood the trial; never in his most unguarded hours did he manifest any bitterness of feeling; never in public was he led into angry recrimination. Often did he provoke some of his more impetuous colleagues by taking the part of the West Indian planter—suggesting excuses for his conduct—alleging that there was no class of persons whom it was so much the interest of the actual managers to keep in darkness as to the abuses of the system—and so extenuating their moral guilt that he drew upon himself a portion of the storm which lowered over his West Indian slanderers. His severest public answer was an apt quotation of the words of Gibbon to an abusive assailant—"Every animal employs the note, or cry, or howl, which is peculiar to its species; every man expresses himself in the dialect most congenial to his temper and inclination, the most familiar to the company in which he has lived, and to the authors with whom he is conversant."

[1] Diary, Feb. 14. [2] Debate, May 22.

On behalf of others whose characters were less ascertained he felt something more. Yet even here, where anger putting on a virtuous semblance is most readily excused, there was the same high and sober tone of feeling. "I trust," he writes to Mr. Macaulay, "that it will please God to spare you long to your family, your friends, and mankind; and the rather because . . though it is of very little consequence to ourselves when we are gone, what may have been, or may be hereafter, said or thought of us on earth . . yet for the sake of others, and the general interests of religion and morals, I do wish that you may continue amongst us to live down those base and wicked falsehoods to which your African and West Indian warfare has exposed you. Though the wealth and activity of our opponents may obtain for a time possession of the public mind, depend on it their hold will not be lasting. May we be enabled to maintain a Christian frame of spirit amidst all these irritating hostilities, and remember that they will by and by appear only like the barking of the cottage curs on our passing through a village, when on our progress in the journey of life."

He set therefore steadily down to the work before him, and would have pressed forward his Registration Bill, if he had not been arrested as before by the evident interests of the cause. Spain and Portugal were now the only European nations who continued the accursed Trade; and Portugal had agreed to present restrictions, and a speedy Abolition. Spanish co-operation was now therefore of

the first importance, and the hope of gaining it staid once more his hand. On the 29th of March he communicates to Mr. Stephen this rising dawn of hope.

"Downing Street, Friday, March 29.

"My dear Stephen,

With unfeigned joy I state to you, that I have just heard from Lord Castlereagh that the council of the Indies, to which the whole question of the Abolition had been referred by the Spanish government, had reported in favour of total and immediate Abolition. But a minority of seven, of whom one has large property in Cuba, had protested against the others and made a separate report. Even they however have recommended abolishing north of the Line immediately, and totally in five years. But all the council seems to wish to make it a condition, that we should give them money, or at least give up their captured ships. Lord C. therefore says, it is of great importance not to talk of the thing at present.

"Last, but scarcely least, it appears that Lord Castlereagh made good use of your pamphlet[1] in impressing the Spaniards, and that they are afraid of our quarrelling with them. Let us bless God, and pray, and hope for the best.

"I am much too late for dinner, but I could not

[1] A Spanish pamphlet also, formed by the Rev. Blanco White out of Mr. Wilberforce's Letter to his Constituents, is said to have had considerable effect at Madrid.

go to it at Lord Harrowby's, till after writing to you. I will call on you on my way to-morrow to dine at the Duke of Gloucester's.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

To secure this step he consented to delay his efforts for the internal regulation of our own possessions. "Depend on it," he urges upon Mr. Stephen, "the loud cry which would be set up that we were fomenting insurrections among the slaves, would operate powerfully against us in the Spanish Cabinet—no less than our apparent weakness. If Lord Castlereagh says that probably the Spaniards will abolish entirely, and that then there will be no urgent reason for pressing the Registry Bill, we shall lose many even of those who had been disposed to support us." After a consultation therefore with the principal supporters of his cause, "Romilly, Brougham, Horner, William Smith, Macaulay, Stephen," he determined "not to bring on the Registry Bill; but to find some motion to which government would agree, and which would yet produce discussion."[4]

At this critical moment the news of a dangerous insurrection in Barbadoes, armed the West Indians with new weapons of assault. "If in such a world as this," he writes to Mr. Babington,[5] "we were not to expect to be calumniated, it would seem beyond what one should be prepared for, to find our West Indian opponents charging us with the effects of their

[4] Diary, May 3. [5] June 7.

own presumption and folly. From the very earliest Abolition efforts they kept clamouring, 'It is emancipation you mean, you mean to make our slaves free;' we all the time denying it. At length—wonderful that not before—the slaves themselves begin to believe it, and to take measures for securing the privilege; in short the artillery they had loaded so high against us, bursts among themselves, and they impute to us the loading and pointing of it."

This same charge he fixed publicly upon his opponents, in proposing to the House the motion on which he had decided."[6] After proving the consistency of his past conduct, and declaring his resolution to attempt every practicable amelioration in the condition of the negroes, "I am naturally led," he continues, "to the consideration of another extremely painful topic, though even here my concern is mixed with surprise at the sort of arguments employed against me. The House will be no less astonished than myself when I say that some persons have even gone the length of charging upon the supporters of the Registry Bill the insurrection of which intelligence has so lately been received. If gentlemen will only act fairly with themselves, I protest that I think it impossible such a notion should for a moment be entertained, and I will state why. Ever since the year 1789, those persons who resist all improvement in the condition of the negroes have been reiterating the cry against us, 'What then, you mean to make the slaves free! You intend to eman-

[6] June 19.

cipate them all at once and without the least notice.' It might be supposed that our opponents would have abandoned this position after we had gone on for twenty-seven years constantly refuting it. But no, they still persevere. 'We have not many good arguments to use,' they may truly assert, 'and we must employ to the utmost such as we are able to fabricate.' Nor have they confined their assertions to this House or to this country, but they have actually printed and published in the West Indies that the design of the friends of the Abolition was to make all slaves instantly free. In short there is nothing however monstrous, however dangerous to the tranquillity of our islands, which they have not laid open to the eyes and ears of all the inhabitants of the West Indies. I state it as a fact that these things were published; and the poor creatures however degraded were not in such a state of absolute brutality as not to be operated upon by some of the passions that actuate the rest of their species. Though unable to read, the domestic slaves would obtain and promulgate the notion that their friends in Great Britain were labouring to give them liberty, while their masters were the only persons who opposed it. I beg leave therefore to say distinctly, that I and my friends are clear of the blood so unhappily shed; let those look to it whose consciences accuse them as the instigators of the commotion. I can lay my hand upon my heart and feel it beat with the regular pulsation of a peaceful conscience."

Towards the close of his speech, he noticed the

prejudices which had taken possession of the public mind, and the personal calumnies by which they had been in part occasioned. "When I consider," he said, "the actual condition of the negroes in the West Indies; when I call to mind the country in which I live, and reflect upon the nature of the heads and hearts of its inhabitants, slow perhaps of conviction, but certain to do justice in the end; when I look back to the sort of opposition which my honourable friends and myself, the advocates of the Abolition, have experienced during the last twenty-eight years; when I recollect the discussions through which we had to pass with the Slave-carrying Bill, the Middle-passage Bill (to remedy a few of the horrors of that dreadful voyage,) which it was so often declared would be ruinous to the West Indies; when I remember also that the Abolition was for a long time in the most hopeless condition; that many of its friends began to despair of the issue; that we had to struggle against the winds, and buffet with the billows, until our strength began to be exhausted, and our spirits almost to fail us, yet at last reached a port of safety; when I know what power it was that led us and animated us; and that the good sense and benevolence of the people of England at last triumphed; I say, when I see all these things, I cannot help declaring my full persuasion that when our cause and its objects are fully understood, we shall be as successful with our future as with our former measures.

"At least we have gained some experience in the contest to which we have been exposed; and the same

weapons are now employed against us that were used in all our former battles, though they may have been a little furbished up to give them a new appearance. The grand arguments against us are derived from what are called Methodism and fanaticism. What gentlemen mean by the terms I am not very well aware, and I may doubt perhaps if they themselves know; but this I will say—if to be feelingly alive to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures and to be warmed with the desire of relieving their distresses, is to be a fanatic, I am one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large. At least such I know I should wish to be; and as the harsh treatment adopted by the other side to cure me does not at all suit my complaint, and is not likely to produce any change, I really would recommend them to alter their regimen. For however loudly one honourable gentleman urges the charge of fanaticism, he is not more happy in his exertions than his predecessors in the same attempt. He does it a little more roughly certainly, but that I ascribe to his Agency. The honourable gentleman is in such a situation that he must act as he has done: he has no choice, no will of his own: he is bound by virtue of his office to make these attacks. His attack at one time was conducted in such a strain that it did occur to me, whether by the usual forms of this House he was at liberty to proceed as he had begun. But perhaps it is better as it stands; upon second thoughts, it is rather a comfortable circumstance than otherwise, because it is an omen of good. The experiment was tried before, and

it failed; and if I am opposed with the same weapons which I formerly vanquished, I have reason to think I shall again triumph." And I will say that eventually we depend for our success upon the very principle by which they endeavour to discredit our cause. I rely upon the religion of the people of this country—because the people of England are religious and moral, loving justice and hating iniquity, they consider the oppressed as their brethren whatever be their complexion; and they will feel more especially for the despised race of the blacks, because they find that they are so despised and degraded."

After having declared that he would renew his measure in the following session, he offered no opposition to an address, by which the Regent was requested to express his disapprobation of the insubordination which had appeared in the colonies, and to recommend to the local authorities to take measures for the improvement and comfort of the negroes.

There was nothing like despondency in the tone of these remarks; and in truth, though he had consented to delay his Bill, he had been labouring in many private ways to further its success. Thus on the 16th of March, he says, "called on Lord Wellesley about Register Bill, and talked with him over old times and persons."[7] To Lord Liverpool he "stated honestly the pain it would cost" him "to oppose his government systematically on a question, which will I am clear, on the long run, (though now people are uninformed and therefore indifferent,) interest in our favour the bulk

[7] Diary.

of the religious and moral part of the community; which will never sit quiet and leave 6 or 700,000 human beings in a state of studiously preserved darkness and degradation."[8] The same views he pressed too on Lord Bathurst, "who assured me that he had told the West Indians frankly, he would next year pass a Registry Bill, if their colonial assemblies would not do it. I guarded him against their doing it fraudulently; in words, but not in substance."[9] On every side too he caught at the least opening for exertion, and in personal communication on the subject with some of the more liberal-minded planters. "Monk Lewis dined with me, to talk over Jamaica. I went again to town to see him; he is I hope in earnest in writing to me to secure the happiness of his slaves after his death; I am quite anxious to try to do some good through this channel."[10]

Such instances as this (and it did not stand alone) deserve to find a place amongst the records of this painful struggle. But, alas! it was more frequently his lot to find that distorted views of private interest choked all such generous purposes; converting sometimes into the warmest enemies of personal freedom those who professed to hold the most "liberal" political opinions. Such an instance, at this time, called forth from Mr. Stephen one of those indignant bursts in which his ardent mind from time to time found vent. "His letter," Mr. Stephen writes, "too plainly shows that we may reckon on him as an opponent—one of the last men I should have distrusted. As to

[8] Diary, May 2. [9] Ib. May 17. [10] Diary.

the pestilent cant of not prejudicing reformation by attempting 'alleged injustice,' and doing violence to 'well-founded scruples,' it would be trying to much greater patience than mine. What a violence was it to the well-founded scruples of Duke's Place, when receiving stolen goods was made felonious! What alleged injustice to prohibit frame-breaking and unlawful oaths in Nottingham! They should wait in Ireland to proclaim the counties till the carders and peep-o'-day boys petition for it. But all similes are weak to illustrate the absurdity of expecting the assemblies to reform slavery, and shut out clandestine Slave Trade.

"This-instance added to others confirms my antipathy to liberty boys and democrats. In all human character I know of nothing so detestable and contemptible as a democrat slave-master or defender of private slavery. I once was fool enough to think Whigs and Jacobins our sure friends, and therefore should have been a Whig or Jacobin myself, if their private vices had not repelled me from their society. I still was fool enough to think that we should have zealous support from the opposition, when they found government against us. I find new reasons to be thankful that I broke with the latter about the Registry Bill, for if I had not, I should have ascribed much or all of what I now see to political dislike and hostility towards myself as the author of that measure, coupled with a natural suspicion of my sincerity. It was to avoid this evil, as you know, and 'acheronta movere,' that I acted as I did; and if I mistook my men, at least I have escaped very painful

self-reproaches by leaving them no excuse in my own conduct.

"It has been more than once in my mind to write to Lords Liverpool and Bathurst, and try to work on their generous and conscientious feelings by telling them in effect that the cause (Divine interposition excepted) is at their mercy; that they have nothing to fear from our political strength; that the public is sated with the subject and not to be roused; and that the parliamentary Whigs and democrats are, with few exceptions, rather hostile than friendly to us; that it lies with *them* therefore, on their responsibility to their own consciences and to God, to frustrate or maintain the noblest work of human benevolence, to correct or perpetuate the most odious system of cruelty and wickedness that ever disgraced and cursed our species."

"How I wish," replied Mr. Wilberforce,[11] "that I could transport myself through the air to Sunning Hill, and pour forth in a quarter of an hour's talk the effusions produced by your desponding letter! I am strongly tempted to employ an hour in writing to you, but I must resist the impulse and only say that I am persuaded your confinement to your desk[12] has diffused a gloomy tint over the whole of your prospects. It has made you judge unfairly of men as well as things. Surely the present phenomena are easily accounted for by two considerations; that the

[11] June 6.

[12] Mr. Stephen was engaged in his great work, "The Slavery of the West Indies delineated in Law and Fact."

West Indian proprietors are extremely numerous, and that their interest with its associated prejudices extends its ramifications far and wide; and, secondly, that the public in general is utterly uninformed on this subject. By degrees however we must inform it. You must write for men of reading, sense, and especially of professional habits, and perhaps as before, virginibus puerisque canto, must be my motto; or rather your concio must be ad clerum, mine ad populum; you must write for the bar and pulpit, and I for the million. My chief fear is of another kind, that Providence is taking the matter into its own hand and rendering the crimes of the West Indians their own punishment."

This calm and settled hope of ultimate success was the usual colour of his mind. "I have much to say to you," he tells Hannah More, "about my Registry Bill, or rather about its object, the amelioration of the state of the poor slaves. Alas, alas, it grieves me to see the Bristol people so misled, but it really is entirely the effect of misinformation; and I have told Davis that I am sure they will agree with me, secretly perhaps in three or four years, but avowedly before it be much longer."

Throughout this session he had taken far less part than usual in its public business. A complaint on his chest hung upon him obstinately, and made him "fear that I shall do little more good. Alas, that I have not laboured more to make the best use of my faculties."[13] "It is a stroke which I own I feel;

[13] Diary, April 17.

not I hope with a rebellious but with a humbled will; yet I trust it may still please God to enable me to use my organs (and oh that it might be better in all ways) in His service, and for the benefit of my fellow-creatures."[14] He was obliged therefore for the most part to confine his exertions in the House to his "own proper business,"[15] and to questions of a moral cast. As "a chamber counsel"[16] he was still labouring diligently. Every year multiplied the private claimants on his time, and this year they abounded, from the tale of ordinary distress, and the throng of "breakfasters," to the "Duke of Kent who more than once called" on him "for two hours about his affairs, and why going abroad—hardly used." On some few great occasions he came forward, and always with effect. In the month of March "the opposition, of which Ponsonby" was "the head, but Brougham the most active, incessant, and bitter," were "pushing at government about the Property Tax, or as it is the fashion with opposers to call it, and as it is pretty fairly called, the Income Tax. Many of government's friends are against them on this question. I think that though in itself it were right it would not be expedient."[17]

When a week after this entry the question came before the House, he declared this opinion in his place, and had no small effect in causing the defeat of ministry. "I spoke last of all, after Lord Castlereagh, having been personally alluded to by

[14] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq.
[15] Diary. [16] Ib. [17] Ib. May 10.

him. I never remember producing more effect by a speech at the time, though there was no account of it in the newspapers." At the end of the session he took an active part in the exertions which were made to provide relief for the pressing distresses of the times. "July 25th. Wrote to Vansittart about the best way of relieving the present distresses preparatory to the general meeting." His advice was not followed; and when four days later he was "at the City of London Tavern, Distressed Manufacturers' meeting, with the Dukes of York, (chairman,) Kent, and Cambridge, Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop of London, Duke of Rutland, and others, Lord Cochrane and a party of his friends made a grand row, grounded on our assigning false causes—the very evil I anticipated. A sad squally meeting, but got through it pretty well altogether. The brutality of the people was shocking, bursting into laughter when the Bishop of London, being unused to public speaking, made a pause. I spoke to prevail on Lord Cochrane to give way. Though I was dissatisfied with myself, partly from matter, partly from voice which failed me, yet my speech was praised." At the sub-committee of this association he attended as long as he remained in the neighbourhood of London.

Lowestoft on the Suffolk coast was the scene of his summer retirement with his family. He had spent but a few weeks there and in its neighbourhood, when he was called suddenly away by the illness of a friend. "In how different a congregation," he writes to his

family on the first Sunday he now spent at Bath, "have I been from that of Pakefield![18] It reminded me of the difference between the twelve poor fishermen, (I did not till now recollect that yours are literally such,) who constituted the first assemblages of Christians, and the well-dressed and well-mannered meetings of the high and the literary, who used to congregate for their various purposes of devotion or instruction. I thank God that our hopes are sanguine of the speedy amendment of our friend. Though I make it an invariable rule not to write letters on the Sunday, except in cases of necessity and charity, yet on the principle of charity I may send you a few friendly lines. I need not assure you that on this day you are all much in my thoughts. I hope you all feel grateful for being brought at once into so friendly an intimacy with so excellent a family as that at Earlham.[19] For my part I am still full of Earlham, or rather of its inhabitants. One of our great astronomers has stated it as probable that there may be stars whose light has been travelling to us from the creation, and has not yet reached our little planet; and thus some have accounted for new stars first observed by more recent astronomers. In this Earlham family a new constellation has broke upon us, for which you must invent a name as you are fond of star-gazing; and if it indicate a little monstrosity, (as they are apt to give the collections of stars the names of strange creatures, dragons, and bears, &c.)

[18] A village near Lowestoft. [19] Joseph John Gurney's.

the various parts of which the Earlham assemblage[20] is made up, may justify some name indicative of queer combinations; only let it include also all that is to be esteemed, and loved, and respected too, and coveted."

Before he had spent many days at Bath he received a hasty summons to attend upon his sister, who had been suddenly attacked by dangerous sickness. It was a great shock to him. His other sisters had been so early taken from them, that there had been none to share or to divide the affection for each other, which had grown in them with their growth and years. Her affectionate admiration of her brother had been rarely equalled, and affection was never wasted upon him. He had parted with her a few weeks before at Cambridge, and rejoiced "to see her better than she had been for a long time past." He was therefore unprepared for such a blow, and set off immediately with a heavy heart for Sunning Hill. "On arriving I heard that my sister had died yesterday at four o'clock. Poor Stephen much affected! Liable to strong paroxysms, at other times calm and pretty cheerful. I prayed by my dear sister's body, and with the face uncovered. Its fixedness very awful. I sat all the evening engaging Stephen, while the coffin was adjusting below. How affecting all these things; how little does the immortal spirit regard it! Looking at night, till near two o'clock this morning,

[20] Amongst the "large party" at the dinner table he mentions the Bishop of Norwich, Col. B. and Lady Emily, Mr. Buxton, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Hudson Gurney, &c.

over my dear sister's letters—many to and from myself, when she and I first in earnest in religion."

"Our separation from each other just at this time," he writes to Lowestoft, "if it produces some pain, yet reminds us of the call we have for gratitude to the Father of mercies, who has so long spared us to each other. How can I but feel this, when our dear friend's solitary situation is so forcibly impressed on me! I indeed have lost a most affectionate sister, one, of whom I can truly say, that I believe there never was on earth a more tenderly attached, generous, and faithful friend to a brother, who, though I hope not insensible to her value, saw but little of her to maintain her affection, and of whom, alas, I could say much that might reasonably have abated the force and cooled the warmth of her attachment.

"How affecting it is to leave the person we have known all our lives, on whom we should have been afraid to let the wind blow too roughly, to leave her in the cold ground alone! This quite strikes my imagination always on such occasions. But there is another thing which has impressed itself in the present instance much more powerfully than in any other I ever remember, I mean in contemplating the face of our dead friend to observe the fixed immovableness of the features. Perhaps it struck me more in my sister's case because her countenance owed more of the effect it produced to the play of features than to their formation. I could not get rid of the effect produced on me by this stiff and cold fixedness for a long time. But oh it is the spirit, the inhabitant of the earthly tenement,

not the tenement itself, which was the real object of our affection. How unspeakably valuable are the Christian doctrines and hopes in such circumstances as ours! We should not care much, if we believed that the object of our tender regard had gone a few days before us a journey we ourselves should travel; especially if we knew that the journey's end was to be a lasting abode of perfect happiness. Now blessed be God, this is after all not an illustration. It is the reality. The only drawback with me here, is the consciousness that I have much to do for God, and the self-reproach for not having done it. Yet here also I can cast myself on the sure mercies of my God and Saviour; and while I desire to do on each day the day's proper work, and to be more active and useful than I ever yet have been, still I can humbly hope that if I should be taken hence with my work unfulfilled, He who said 'Thou didst well that it was in thine heart,' will graciously forgive my sins; and that my all-merciful Saviour will take me to Himself out of the same superabundant goodness, which I have ever experienced. For how true it is, (I am often driven to this,) 'Thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor Thy ways as our ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways higher than our ways, and Thy thoughts than our thoughts!'

"I think I told you that my dear sister, when asked whether God comforted her and gave her peace, said, 'O yes, so much so, as quite to put me to shame when I consider what a sinner I am.' She then exclaimed—so like herself, 'I hope this is not cant;' adding, however, 'I am sure it is not all so.'"

"I am extremely pressed for time," he tells Hannah More, "but I am with you in heart. It is probable that ere now your sister is no more. I begin, though with different accompaniments, to feel like Macbeth 'acquainted with death.' O my dear friend, may all we most love be made ready, and may we ourselves be more so. You may rejoice in that God and Saviour who have blessed you, and made you a blessing to so many; may you have a gradual and easy release, whenever it may be the will of God to remove you. Your sister Patty, that generous creature! has been in my mind all the time I have been scribbling these last sentences, and I have applied them mentally to her. I must break off. Farewell."

After a few days he returned to Bath, and staid in its neighbourhood until the 13th of November, when he set out by the London coach to join his family at Kensington Gore. "Mr. H—— immediately recognised me, and with stentorian voice left me no peace till his whole tale was told... Inventor of Tram roads, founder of all great iron works in Monmouthshire, &c... Arrived safely D. G. at half-past ten at Kensington Gore, after travelling above 700 miles without a single accident. The boys coming out immediately to me, and receiving me with humiliating kindness—God bless them!"[21]

At his first leisure his thoughts were turned to the West Indies. "I think," he tells Mr. Macaulay, "that I ought to write, and affix my name to an appeal to Abolitionists for the purpose of undeceiving and rousing the public. Your 'Sketches' so far from

[21] Diary.

being hereby superseded would be rendered more useful, and the same of Stephen's work; to which it would serve in truth as an advertisement. For the chief value of this will be, that we shall possess in it a repository of principles and fundamental facts to which we ourselves may have recourse, and to which we may send others. It will also gradually, but not rapidly, fix the public standard of opinion on West India subjects so far as the slaves are concerned, producing this effect through the medium of the first and second raters, who will read, write, and refer to it. But then all this implies, that so far from sufficing, it will require other means of bringing it forward, and rendering it productive of its due effects. Now tell me your mind honestly on this head. Remember that my pamphlet will not proceed at the rapid rate of your works; for though but a mouse should come forth, the time of gestation would be that almost of an elephant. But I must break off. I am about to take my family for health's sake to the coast. If your time of sea-siding be not expired, why should you not come over, and spend a little time at Hastings; when together we can chafe each other into warmth and sparkling?

"Let me beg you to thank the General[22] for a very kind letter from Scotland. It gratified me by making me in idea a party to his tour, but he did not tell me where he should alight, and I was always a bad hand at shooting flying. I will not treat him so ceremoniously as to take up my pen when inconvenient to myself, merely to say I have answered him. If two friends pass each

[22] General Macaulay.

other, and one having more leisure can stop and chat, and the other being pressed for time is forced to pass on in silence, he is not therefore sulking. O my dear Macaulay, my dear sister enjoyed in her last illness a measure of consolation and peace quite unusual with her in the seasons of health, and she is now doubtless in paradise. Sit anima mea cum illâ. Farewell."

Besides his preparations for this pamphlet, he was corresponding with Lord Castlereagh on the various stipulations of the Foreign Slave Trade. "Even for this object," he tells Mr. Stephen, "I am better at a distance from London; if I saw him from time to time, he would contrive to secure my acquiescence, so far as to prevent my afterwards objecting; whereas, by my writing, he will have the effect of my letter diffused over the whole course of the correspondence. Whatever weight is to be obtained from the idea of my parliamentary approbation or censure will remain entire, and I can strengthen his hands with the foreign ministers, by writing letters, part of which he may read them."

There had been no abatement of the storm, which had been raised against the Registration Bill. It was taken up as a colonial question. A voluntary tax upon every hogshead of sugar which passed the Custom House, was raised by the West Indians to oppose the measure; and one and all clamoured loudly against its proposers. All this tumult of calumny passed over him almost unnoticed. At times indeed he nearly roused himself to make some reply, lest they should occupy the public mind, and prejudice

his cause. But there is really no trace of any personal feeling in any of his entries. "It is quite shocking," he says to Mrs. Wilberforce of one of his fellow-labourers, whom these reports had greatly wounded, "to see the health of a man like —— endangered by the unprincipled calumnies of such a varlet as ——. He is in so nervous a state, that there is great cause for serious alarm about him. It is anxiety, and even still more vexation at himself for being anxious, which so harasses him. A cheerful temper is a great blessing, as I have abundant reason for saying; but —— has more cause for anxiety than I have." "The Speaker of the House of Assembly at Barbadoes," he tells Mr. Stephen, "has made a very scurrilous speech, and says he always thought you a dangerous man. However, I can excuse their violence. Their feelings cannot but be wounded and acescent." "An acquaintance has sent me the Courier. A more scandalous attack I have seldom seen; but I am rather animated than discouraged by it."

It was not merely cheerfulness of temper, on which this calm was based, there was a deeper and more sure foundation for this high-minded peacefulness under perpetual provocation. "I get more and more to disrelish these brawlings, and to be less touchy as to my character. This I fear is chiefly from advancing fears, and quiescence; something from the decay of natural spirits, and some little I hope from the growing indifference to human estimation, and from an increased value for peace and love.

But it is our clear duty to prevent our good being evil spoken of, when we can do this by a fair and calm defence; and I very greatly deplore my not having prepared an answer to Marryatt. His answer to one charge, that he had pledged himself not to interfere with the condition of the slaves, deserves to be recorded. "It is really true," he tells Mr. Stephen,[23] "as I must one day state, (I grieve at my not having answered Marryatt in print; he very wisely never would enter into controversy on his legs,) that the condition of the West Indian slaves first drew my attention, and it was in the course of my inquiry, that I was led to Africa and the Abolition. As long ago as in 1781, the very first year of my being in parliament, and when I was not twenty-two years of age, I wrote a letter to James Gordon expressing my hopes that some time or other I might become the instrument of breaking, or at least easing, the yoke of these poor creatures" (the West Indian slaves). "I have for some time had an idea of publishing Burke's plan with a preface, but not yet. Such a piece would be subsidiary to your larger work, which is to make its way with lawyers, and gradually to alter the public standard, by convincing the people that set it. Reflection renders me more and more confident that we shall, or at least that they who live a few years will, see the beginings of great reforms in the West Indies, as well as opening prospects of civilization in Africa. In the latter instance I must even to you say that Pitt's death has been an irreparable loss to us. He had

[23] Jan. 15.

truly grand ideas on the topic of our moral and humane debt to Africa. But still our cause is so good that I am clear we shall establish it in the judgment of the religious part of the community."[24]

This was the calm confidence of a reasonable hope. While it was at the highest, he planned his measures with deliberate judgment.[25] 'It is very grievous," he writes to Macaulay ten days later, "to be thus harassed with a set of snarling calumniators, for like you I long for peace and quietness. But I am very sorry I have not written something in answer to Marryatt; yet had I done so, it would have come out just now when the nation is full of its own grievances, and we might incur the imputation of being indifferent to the sufferings of our countrymen, compared with our sensibility when a black skin is in question. I have for some time been unwillingly yielding to a secret suggestion that it would be better perhaps to lie upon our oars in the Registry Bill, and West Indian cause. When parliament meets, the whole nation, depend upon it, will be looking up for relief from its own burthens, and it would betray an ignorance of all tact to talk to them in such circumstances of the sufferings of the slaves in the West Indies. We should specially guard against appearing to have a world of our own, and to have little sympathy with the sufferings of our countrymen."

[24] Jan. 17.

[25] In one of his MS. books dated Dec. 1816, among copious notices on the state of the West Indies, appears the following remark:—

"Against precipitancy.—Moses 80, Aaron 83 years old, when God sent them to lead out the Israelites from Egypt. Abraham 100 years old when Isaac born. Our Saviour himself 30 years old before he came forth, having till then probably worked with his father at his trade."

The distresses of the country soon called him to his post; and leaving his family at Hastings, he was in town by the opening of parliament upon the 28th of January, and found the political horizon unusually dark. "We are here, (in the Secret Committee,[96]) " he writes back to Hastings, "in the midst of accounts of plots, &c., but a gracious Providence, I trust, watches over us. Remember to pray in earnest against sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion."[97] "The Secret Committee," he says three days later, "put off; and the chief conspirators having been taken up the day before, all went off quietly to-day. House. Lord Milton's business put off for ministers to be at their posts, if there is a riot in Spa Fields. Hunt's second meeting." His time was now fully occupied. "I feel," he writes from the table of the Secret Committee room, "the effects of sitting up too late. But do not be uneasy, I am pretty well. Dear —— asks about our Committee, though he very properly checks himself. We are not to divulge; but thus much I may say, though do not let it be repeated out of doors, that the seizing of the ringleaders on Sunday last prevented bloodshed from the Spa Fields mob on Monday. Hunt seems a foolish, mischief-making fellow, but no conspirator, though the tool of worse and deeper villains. Cobbett is the most pernicious of all; but God will bless and keep us, I fear not; and it is highly gratifying that all the truly religious classes have nothing to do with the seditious proceedings. The blasphemous songs and papers of the seditious will disgust all who have any religion, or any decency."

[96] Appointed Feb. 5. [97] Feb. 8.

So constant were at this time the calls on his attention that he assures Mr. Roberts, "you have perhaps supposed that now I am no longer member for Yorkshire I have as much leisure as I can desire for my own enjoyment and the service of my friends. If such was your surmise, never I assure you were you more mistaken. I do not find the smallest diminution of the amount of my business, though there is some difference in its nature." Yet in the midst of all this occupation the flow of his kindly natural affections was as warm and free as if his mind was never burthened by a single thought of business. Some of its expressions in his correspondence with his family are peculiarly striking; and his letters though written often in "those edgings of time, which like the edgings of cloth or other substances are their least valuable part,"[28] are full of thought and manly tenderness. "Mr. R.'s last letter," he writes to Hastings at this time, "suggests to me some very painful fears that ——'s temper has been again ungoverned—dear, dear boy. Though writing at the Committee table with people all around me, I can scarce refrain from tears while I thus write about him. Oh that he would pray earnestly! How sure I am that he would then be blessed with grace, and be enabled to make our hearts leap for joy. Farewell—a thousand times God bless you all!"

This was the great aim of his parental watchfulness. "O if I could but see them give up their hearts to God," he says in another letter, "I think that I could

[28] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq.

cheerfully lay down my life." "Above all, my dearest ——," he writes to one of them on his tenth birth-day, "I am anxious to see in you decisive marks of this great change. I come again and again to look and see if it be indeed begun, just as a gardener walks up again and again to examine his fruit trees, and see if his peaches are set, and if they are swelling and becoming larger; finally, if they are becoming ripe and rosy. I would willingly walk barefoot from this place" (near London) "to Sandgate, to see a clear proof of it in my dear —— at the end of my journey." "May God bless you, and if it be His will, may we be long spared to each other. I am strongly impressed with a persuasion that this will much depend on the goings-on of our children; and as I have often said, let it be with us an argument for growing in grace, that in proportion as we do thus cultivate an interest, if I may so express it, in the court of Heaven, the more we shall insure our children's edification in answer to our earnest prayers."[29]

Upon his busiest days he found time to write to them. "Were it not," he tells one of his daughters, "that my eyes were so weak, and that, in such a state, writing by candle-light does not suit me, especially after a full day's work following a bad night, you would have received a good long letter instead of this sheetling. My last night's wakefulness arose in fact from my thinking on some subjects of deep interest, from which, though I made several efforts, I could not altogether withdraw my thoughts. My mind obeyed

[29] To Mrs. Wilberforce.

me indeed while I continued wide awake, but when I was dropping half asleep it started aside from the serious and composing train of ideas to which I had forced it up; and like a swerving horse chose to go its own way rather than mine. I like to direct my language as well as my thoughts and feeling towards you on a Saturday night, because it serves as a preparation for that more continued mental intercourse with you in which I allow myself on the Sunday. When I was a bachelor, and lived alone, I used to enliven the dulness of a solitary Sunday dinner by mustering my friends around me in idea, and considering how I could benefit any of them; and now how can there be a more suitable employment of a part of the Lord's day, than thus to call my absent children round me? And you, ——, and ——, will present yourselves to-morrow; and I shall pray that our great heavenly Shepherd will number you amongst the sheep of His pasture, and guide you at last into His fold above."

Many of these letters are highly indicative of his peculiar character of mind, from their cheerfulness subsiding into serious thought as affection stirred the deeper current of his feelings. Thus to one of his younger sons[30] he writes from London.

"House of Commons.

"My dear ——,

I take advantage of a dull speech to come upstairs and chat a little with my dear ——, though I

[30] Ætat 11.

heartily regret that I alone can be the speaker, for I should gladly hear my dear boy's voice and see his countenance. Yesterday was the first time of my going to Kensington Gore. I had no comfort there, but many qualms of emptiness when you were all away, and only vacant places to remind me of the want of you. I hope Mr. L. told you that I had tried to get your watch mended in time to go down to you by him, but in vain. A broken limb is not so easily repaired, especially when it is required that the party shall *go* as he did before. I am sorry to hear that the substitute you have is liable to occasional head-aches. I hope you will bear this in mind in your treatment of it, and not let it be stunned or stupified through carelessness.

"My very dear boy, I received no little pleasure from the account which Mr. L. gave of you. I hope that while he is absent from his earthly father, my dear —— will look up the more earnestly to that heavenly Father, who watches over all that trust in Him. Try to bring on your brother in all good, ever remembering my advice not to be satisfied with not being unkind, but trying to be positively kind. Above all remember prayer is the great means of spiritual improvement, and guard as you would against a wild beast which was lying in a bush by which you were to pass, ready to spring on you—guard in like manner against wandering thoughts when you are at prayer, either by yourself or in the family. Nothing grieves the Spirit more than our willingly suffering our thoughts to wander, and fix themselves on any object which hap-

pens at the time to interest us. May God bless and keep you, my very dear boy. I think that my dear —— is greatly improved in bearing little crosses of inclination properly, and I do hope that God will hear my prayers for him, and will make him a comfort and a support to my declining years. I have indulged the serious train of thought into which I naturally fall in writing to my children, and am ever, my dear ——,

Your most affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Nor was it for his children only that this tenderness of spirit had survived all the chilling influences of a long public life. His affection for his friends was in its degree as strong. "I am writing," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "at C.'s with whom I am come to dine tête-à-tête. He sees no other company, dear fellow, so that it is a great pleasure to him I believe, and must be beneficial also, for me to sit with him as much as I can. You may be sure therefore, that I do my best in this way. It is a sad encroachment on my time; but I love him more and more, and value him not less. I must copy for you a short passage from Southey's last letter. 'I hope from your mention of C. that I was mistaken in representing him to be in a dangerous state of health. Yet when I saw him, I could not but fear that he was not long to be a sojourner on earth. There is an expression in his countenance at times, which has more of heaven than of earth about it; something which is at once inexpressibly sweet and mournful, like the smile of a

broken heart.' Do show this beautiful passage to Mr. Rolliston, who appeared to me to enter fully into C.'s character. Indeed let all see it, as the beautifully tender sentiment, exquisitely expressed, of a very superior man concerning my dear friend. Lord Bacon says, that we bear better to hear our friends abused, than our enemies well spoken of. But I am sure that the converse of this dictum of the great Bacon's holds true in my instance; for this eulogy on the expression of my dear friend's countenance has given me very great pleasure. I must break off. Farewell.—"

One other brief but touching instance shall be added from these crowded days.

"My dear Stephen,

You appeared to me to look unhappy last night, as if something was giving you pain either in body or mind. It will be a pleasure to me to hear that this was not so; or if it was, and I can help to remove it, let me try.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The inquiries of the Secret Committee disclosed a fearful extent and degree of disaffection. "You and I agree," he wrote to Mr. Macaulay before he came to town, "in esteeming it to be the duty of every good subject to support government when he can. But then I own I feel that to draw on ourselves the ill-will, and worse than neutrality, of opposition on all West Indian questions, when we cannot have govern-

ment as our friends, is to act in a way, which though it might become our duty if the ship were in danger of going down, is not to be expected from us unless in such critical circumstances. I have again and again been silent when I should have spoken against the democrats, and even oppositionists, more especially against party, but for the consciousness that I had to look to the opposition rather than to government, as our supporters in the Registry Bill and West Indian matters."

The unsettled aspect of the times now so far suspended these ordinary motives, that he prepared to take an active part in strengthening the hands of the executive. "Read," he says to one correspondent who had consulted him upon this subject,[31] "the last article in the last Quarterly,[32] it is written with a pen of fire." "I continue," he tells a Yorkshire friend,[33] "friendly to the moderate, gradual, and almost insensibly operating Parliamentary Reform, which was last brought forward by Mr. Pitt. I am firmly persuaded that at present a prodigious majority of the more intelligent people of this country are adverse to the measure. In my view so far from being an objection to the discussion, this is rather a recommendation of it. But it is a serious and very strong objection to its present consideration, that the efforts of certain demagogues have had too much success in influencing the minds of the lowest of the

[31] Feb. 17.
[32] On the Progress of the Popular Discontents, No. XXXII.
[33] Feb. 7.

people in several of our manufacturing districts, most falsely persuading them that the evils under which we at present labour are owing to the state of our parliamentary representation, and that they would be cured by a Parliamentary Reform. I have given you this general idea of my sentiments to enable you to form an opinion as to the propriety of my attending the ensuing public meeting at York." [34]

But all such intentions were cut short by a sharp and sudden fit of illness, which seized him the very day following the presentation of their Report by the Secret Committee. "I have just written to Lord Castlereagh," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "to express my concern at not being able to support him to-night in the House of Commons, and to the Duke of Gloucester, (and the Duchess too I should have said,) who had invited me to meet the Queen at Gloucester House to-night." And a few days later he declares, "It has been a very great mortification to me, or rather it would be, were it not for the reflection that all is in higher hands, that I cannot attend the House to support the measures which have been taken, and are still in progress, for preserving the public peace. I assure you that in my judgment they are absolutely needed if we would not incur the danger of bloodshed and conflagration." [35] "Perhaps, however, my not being able to attend the House, was kindly intended by Providence to prevent my need-

[34] A requisition for a county meeting on Reform, &c. was at this time originated by the opposition party in Yorkshire.

[35] To the Rev. Charles Simeon, March 3.

lessly differing from some who are friendly to my object of West Indian reform."[36]

This attack was so serious as to hurry Mrs. Wilberforce to London on the summons of the friends who watched anxiously the inroads it was making on his feeble constitution; but after about three weeks, the cough, which was its worst symptom, yielded to medical treatment, and on the 11th of March he "thanked God that he was much better, but giving this week to annealing." His first attendance in the House was on the 18th, on the Lottery question. "I can venture to assure you," he had written a month earlier to Mr. Roberts, "that this national sin will ere long be rooted out of the catalogue of our transgressions. Mr. Lyttleton last session gave notice of a motion to abolish it this year, and though I fear the House of Commons, actuated by worldly rather than by Christian motives, will consider the present distresses of the country as a plea for continuing, not for putting an end for ever to this public system of gambling, and therefore though I dare not be sanguine in the hope of seeing it renounced this year, yet I am confident that many will not elapse before it is got rid of." In moving its suppression, "Lyttleton argued too much like a man who is conscious that he is liable to be quizzed by his gay companions for talking of religion, morality, &c. Romilly as commonly was feeling, moral, and elevated. I had not arranged any order of thought, and I argued it too much on the ground of its effects, though not omitting higher

[36] Diary, March 5.

considerations, but not enough introducing God's providence and will, (in the way wherein alone proper there,) and subjecting myself therefore to the answer Castlereagh gave, as if it were a question of feeling, not of right and wrong. How shocking does it seem to me on cool consideration, deliberately, for the sake of £500,000 per annum, to break God's laws and abjure his protection! Oh may He forgive us."[37] "Replied," his Diary continues, "to Dr. Gaskin, who had very kindly written to me, to ask if true that I had communicated at the Dissenting meeting in his parish. I knew not it was his parish, but I did not preconsider enough." This had happened a few weeks before, when staying with some friends at Islington, whom he had accompanied to their ordinary place of worship. "So far," he told Dr. Gaskin in reply, "from its being my practice to communicate in Dissenting meetings, it is the only time it has ever happened." It was an act which he never repeated. Dr. Gaskin's answer stated forcibly the grounds on which he deemed such conformity unlawful. "He is a very worthy, and I believe truly religious man, and wrote me a very proper letter," was Mr. Wilberforce's next report to Mr. Stephen. "After all I fear the fault was acting too much from impulse, and not enough thinking beforehand." Dr. Gaskin's letter[38] he docketted "Claims of the Church—deserves most serious consideration;" and "reading the 5th Book of Hooker," is a following entry in his Diary.

[37] Diary, March 18.

[38] Vid. Correspondence, &c.

He had now resumed his attendance on the House, and hastened to uphold the hands of government. "Feb. 28th. House—Seditious Meetings Bill. I spoke first opportunity, strongly defending the Bill. April 1st. African Institution meeting, to settle whether to give up Dr. H.'s name, which the Duke and others supported. Brougham argued powerfully, as I urged also, that it would be positively wrong as well as inexpedient. The Tenth Report of this Society contained, "through the error of our secretary, commonly a most careful man,"[39] an erroneous statement of a case of cruelty. Such a slip was caught at eagerly by the West Indian body, and made the ground of prosecution for a libel. "As soon as the mistake was known, the publication was suppressed, but the opportunity could not be wasted, and the cause was pushed to trial, and Hatchard (the publisher) was found, as we expected, guilty. We, of course, shall prevent his suffering." The name of their misinformant was never given up; yet Mr. Wilberforce complains,[40] "he seems rather querulous, and a little disposed to regard himself as a saint in our calendar, though poor Hatchard has been the martyr." "This trial is likely to be injurious to us. What a pity it is that our secretary did not at once frankly state how the mistake arose! So able and accurate a man might well stand the avowal of so trifling an error, though in its consequences important. I am sometimes discouraged by finding all these things going against us; yet surely the cause we are engaged in is the cause of God—endeavour-

[39] Letter to Mrs. Wilberforce. [40] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq.

ing by legitimate methods to succour the wretched and right the injured and oppressed."

He had too the encouraging remembrance of past success. There was a time when he had stood almost alone, to urge on a reluctant parliament the Abolition of the British Slave Trade; and he had lived to see the day, when the whole power of England was exerted to persuade other nations to sacrifice the guilty traffic. "April 30th. Almost immediately after breakfast, forced to town to Castlereagh on Spanish Abolition—with him for above an hour on the Spanish Abolition business. He really takes much pains for the cause. He says he has written more on this head than on any other. The Spaniards are pressing hard for £600,000, and for a loan. (They refused £600,000, and a loan of 2 millions, for immediate Abolition during the war.) We refused, and at last got them to treat on the basis of £400,000 for ships taken, &c. half to be paid now, half when the Abolition is completed in May 1819. But this last condition they will not assent to. Lord Castlereagh wishes me to consider and consult friends. He seems to think, and I must say fairly enough, that he has done famously, though from the actual state of the country, I cannot catch at the offer as in other circumstances."[41]

"Battersea Rise to dinner, where Southey.[42] Saw him for the first time, and much struck with him. Acland, Lord Sidmouth, Robert Grant, Governor Raffles, &c. We dined at seven o'clock, and time flew away so rapidly, that we kept on chatting till two in the

[41] Diary. [42] Ib. April 26.

morning, and my watch having stopped, I thought it was half-past eleven." "It was at Battersea Rise," writes Mr. Southey,[43] "at Sir Robert, then Mr. Inglis's, that I saw Mr. Wilberforce for the first time. A memorable day it was to me on that account, and also because I then for the first time saw the late Bishop of Limerick.

"How it happened I know not, but although no person can be more disinclined to disputation than myself, we got into one upon the question of Catholic Emancipation; your father and Sir Thomas Acland taking the one side, and I the other. Inglis had not yet been in parliament, and I did not know what his opinions were upon the subject. Jebb I knew agreed with me; for with him, as coming from Ireland, the state of that country had been one of the first things on which we had touched when introduced to each other. They took little or no part. It was a subject on which I spoke with no diffidence, because nothing could appear to me more certain, than the perilous consequences which would ensue, if the friends of the Church should be so far deluded by its enemies, as to assist them in throwing down the bulwarks of the Protestant establishment. But if my temper had been likely to hurry me into any unbecoming warmth, your father's manner would effectually have repressed it. His views, when I thought him most mistaken, were so benign, he took the ground of expediency with so religious a feeling, and argued with such manly yet such earnest sincerity, that if it had been

[43] Oct. 31, 1835.

possible to have persuaded me out of an opinion so deeply and firmly rooted, he would have done it. Our discussion, for so it may be called, was protracted till two in the morning; and it was so unusual for me to turn night into day in this manner, and so little suited to my health, that I made it a condition with our host from that time forth, whenever I might be present to be permitted to retire at eleven o'clock, let who would be there."

"May 3rd. Callers in morning—with Lord Bathurst on West Indian subjects—then letter-writing—then, not till almost six, Exhibition dinner—could only glance over a few of the pictures—I between Lord Brownlow and Huskisson—near us Charles Long, Sir W. Scott, Sir G. Beaumont, Kemble, Southey, and others." "My next meeting with Mr. Wilberforce," continues Mr. Southey, "if I remember rightly, was at the dinner of the Royal Academy, the only public dinner at which I was ever present. I went to it with the late Sir George Beaumont; your father sat near us, and Sir William Scott nearly opposite him. Upon occasion of a glass of hermitage, Sir William called to him across the table, and reminded him that he was the person who in his youth had brought that wine into fashion in England. I have not forgotten the smile with which your father replied, 'I believe I was, Sir William.'"

"6th. Mr. H. H. breakfasted, and rather bored me on the Catholic Question—speaking against the Roman Catholics as if I wanted any fresh reasons against their system. 9th. Roman Catholic Question decided

—I would not speak. Canning poor—Peel excellent —Lord Castlereagh very good. 16th. Dr. Chalmers breakfasted with me—Inglis—old Symons and others. Much pleased with Chalmers' simplicity—walked and talked in garden. House late on Clergy Residence Bill, and slept in town. 17th. Lord Grenville's early, then Duke of Gloucester—meeting of West India Committee—he generously, and with really noble unmanaging simplicity, owned Lord Grenville differed from him, and afterwards gave up his idea. Dined Lambeth, public day—sat next the Bishop of Ossory, who immediately began talking on Catholic Question, on which he had spoken yesterday, with great frankness, indicating a generous manly spirit and good understanding. Lords Rolle, Bathurst, and others there, and Sir J. Hippisley, who had that morning taken the two titulars to Lambeth, where Archbishop very civil to them."

"Whom think you," he asks Hannah More, "I received five days ago at breakfast? Drs. Everard and Murray; the one titular Archbishop of Dublin, the other (Dr. Everard) coadjutor to the titular Archbishop of Cashell—the latter introduced to me by a letter from Alex. Knox, speaking of him in the highest terms, and adding that the true Sosia (the real live Archbishop of Cashell) had lately told him, 'I delight in Dr. Everard.' I felt myself bound in honesty to tell them, when by ourselves, and softening it as much as I could in the manner, that though from political motives I judged it right not to resist the claims of the Roman Catholics to sit in parliament, this did not arise

in any degree from my having a less unfavourable opinion of the Roman Catholic religion than most of their opponents in the parliamentary application. This of course entre nous; indeed you are almost the only one of the Anti-Roman-Catholic-Question people to whom I would have confided my having eaten with these infectious doctors. I can truly say that it is my firm opinion, that stopping at the point at which matters now are is doing more than any thing else to preserve the Roman Catholic religion in full and active vitality. We ought either to go back or to advance. I will frankly own that I am by no means clear, that if the elective franchise had not been completely thrown open to the Roman Catholics, I should consent to their possession of that privilege. But of all points, that at which we have now rested is, it must be confessed, the worst.

"Poor Sally More," says his Diary, May 19th, "died about a week ago, after long and extreme suffering; yet never impatient, but perfectly submissive and resigned—what a triumph of grace! All the world wild about Dr. Chalmers; he seems truly pious, simple, and unassuming. Sunday, 25th. Off early with Canning, Huskisson, and Lord Binning, to the Scotch Church, London Wall, to hear Dr. Chalmers. Vast crowds—Bobus Smith, Lord Elgin, Harrowby, &c. So pleased with him that I went again; getting in at a window with Lady D. over iron palisades on a bench. Chalmers most awful on carnal and spiritual man. Home tired, and satisfied that I had better not have gone for edification." "I

was surprised to see how greatly Canning was affected; at times he quite melted into tears. I should have thought he had been too much hardened in debate to show such signs of feeling." "All London," he was soon after told in a very different circle from his own, "has heard of your climbing in at that window." With the healthful play of a vigorous mind he entered readily into the joke. "I was surveying the breach with a cautious and inquiring eye, when Lady D., no shrimp you must observe, entered boldly before me, and proved that it was practicable."

Reviewing the last month upon the 1st of June, he determined to "keep an account, and watch in all ways to redeem the time. Having so many breakfasters sadly interrupts me. Often they have staid till nearly one o'clock. Thus every thing falls into arrears. Let me strive to set the main-spring right, and then to mend the works also. God help and direct me; and though I deserve no such honour, enable me yet to do some good. I humbly hope that I have lost my deliberate vain-glory; but for Christ's honour I should be sorry to sink, as I am now doing, into disrepute from my own mismanagement or indolence, added to a real decline of powers. May God purify my motives, while He prompts, quickens, and strengthens me for action. I have felt this day more comfort in religion than for some time past."[44]

Though these were his reflections, when in the stillness of his chamber he tried himself by the high standard to which he aspired, the casual expressions of one

[44] Diary.

of his letters give a truer picture of his actual services. Urging one of his children to steady application—"You cannot conceive," he says, "with what pleasure I look forward to the time when you will be able to engage in plans for the improvement and happiness of your fellow-creatures. I cannot but feel it as an honour, though except to a son I should not mention it, that when people have any scheme in view that is to do good they come to me as an ally in such a warfare against sin and misery." The very next day's Diary supplies an instance of these customary applications. "Cunninghame came in, and young Mr. W., with a charitable case of a foreigner and his family. I so much respect young W., a marine lieutenant giving up his half-pay for his father's support, and maintaining himself as a clerk in a warehouse, and yet busying himself for these poor people, that I could not help becoming answerable for the £20 he wanted for them, if I could not get it from the Distressed Foreigners' Institution. 5th. To the annual meeting of the National Schools, Baldwin's Gardens—two archbishops and many bishops—Dr. Bell there—respectable meeting. Then House—meeting about Cotton Mills' Committee. Then thanks to Lord Colchester. Afterwards Secret Committee, whether new or old one[45]—a very foolish debate I thought, and quite grieved that Babington voted with them."

The aspect of the times was again clouded over. "At Babington's, the window being open, we heard a shout, which we soon found was produced by Wat-

[45] His name was included in both lists.

son's acquittal. The Chief Justice Ellenborough summed up strongly against the prisoner, but it is said there was a jury-man who was decided to acquit. How ill-judged was it of government to suffer the trial to drag on so! Never surely was there a criminal convicted—never one who did not become popular—after having been the subject of a trial for six or seven days." The Secret Committee was now sitting, and he attended constantly at its deliberations, in vain endeavouring, on the 18th, "to get Ponsonby and Lord Milton to agree to the Report; they decidedly resolved not to do so;" and on the next day "altering the part respecting the employment of the secret informer." The Report was presented on the 20th, and on the 23rd the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was proposed by government. Mr. Wilberforce reluctantly supported what he deemed an unavoidable severity. His freedom from all party spirit gave a weight to his decision, which was keenly felt by opposition. Sir Samuel Romilly directed all his powers of eloquence and reasoning to take off the effect of so unimpeachable a judgment; and another member in a different strain attacked him warmly on the third reading with an unworthy sarcasm aimed at his religious work. "The honourable and religious member," as he addressed him amidst cries of order from all sides of the House, "could hardly vote for any measure more thoroughly opposed to vital Christianity." He was strongly tempted to retort on his opponent the obvious epithet suggested by his opening sarcasm; but with a rare forbearance he repressed the impulse to render railing for railing.

"I shall take no notice," he began, "of what has been said concerning myself, though I claim no credit for my silence, for I am well convinced that there is not a man in the House who would not feel lowered by replying to such language as the honourable member has allowed himself to use." He then adverted to the measure under discussion, and showed that however unwelcome, it was essential to the public safety; and then as this very necessity had been created by such inflammatory addresses as that just delivered, he was led to administer to his opponent the most severe rebuke which he ever uttered in the House. "How," he said turning round to the preceding speaker, "how can the honourable member talk thus of those religious principles on which the welfare of the community depends? I would fain believe that he desires as sincerely as I do myself to perpetuate to his country the blessings she enjoys. But if I could be base enough to seek the destruction of those institutions which we both profess to revere, I will tell him what instrument I would choose. I would take a man of great wealth, of patrician family, of personal popularity, aye, and of respectable talents, and I am satisfied that such a one, while he scattered abroad the firebrands of sedition under pretence that he went all lengths for the people, would in reality be the best agent in the malevolent purpose of destroying their liberties and happiness."

His Diary simply states, "B. forced me up in self-defence, and the House sided with me, though I forgot what I meant to say." "But never in my parliamentary life," says a member present, "did I hear

a speech which carried its audience more completely with it, or was listened to with such breathless attention." "I cannot recall," says another, "the capital sentence with which he concluded; and the reporters, for I looked in the papers next morning, did no justice to its force. But I well remember the manner in which he worked up his supposition, and then brought it home to his opponent. You know B——'s manner when attacked, his head high, his body drawn up. His tall figure as he sat on the upper bench immediately behind was the higher of the two, even when Wilberforce stood up to speak. But when after speaking for a few minutes Wilberforce turned round to address him amidst the cheers of the House, he seemed like a pigmy in the grasp of a giant. I never saw such a display of moral superiority in my life."

Nothing can make his uniform forbearance more instructive than the knowledge that he at all times possessed this ready power of self-defence. "If there is any one," said Mr. Canning, "who understands thoroughly the tactics of debate, and knows exactly what will carry the House along with him, it certainly is my honourable friend the member for Bramber."

One other matter only engaged him in the House of Commons before the recess—an address to the Crown to strengthen ministers in their negociations with the court of Spain. On the 2nd of July, "having seen Castlereagh for some time early," he "settled" his "address for Wednesday next." The next day he wished to devote to preparation, "but

could not give a minute to it. It was really necessary to write letters to Castlereagh, Bathurst, Vansittart, and Grenville. I was grieved to be so disappointed, when a very friendly letter from Lord Grenville cheered me, by informing me that he would come to move a joint address." On the 9th he went "to Lord Castlereagh, Mackintosh, and Lord Lansdown's, then home; and busy till House on my address to the Crown to negociate for Abolition. I saw the House was not attentive to me, so I could not please myself, though I did pretty well; but the subject has grown stale and flat." That it should be flat and stale as a subject of discussion, was a happy change from the time when to name Abolition was to give the signal for violence or ridicule; and in its material object his address abundantly succeeded."

Three months later he wrote to Macaulay.

"Stansted, Oct. 9, 1817.

"My dear Macaulay,

However pressed for time, I must tell you without delay, or renounce for ever all claims to being capable of the relations of peace and amity, that a very friendly and handsome letter from Castlereagh informs me, that he has actually received the treaty with Spain (signed) for abolishing the Slave Trade generally and finally in May, 1820, and immediately to the north of the Line. Also, which is scarcely less valuable, that a system of mutual search is agreed to be established for enforcing the Abolition law. Well may we praise God. I do congratulate you my dear

friend, and no one has more right than you to be congratulated; for no one has done or suffered more or so much as yourself, in and for this great cause. Farewell. With kind remembrances,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

It was indeed "glorious intelligence;" a blessed fruit of many years of labour spent in striving calmly and patiently to arouse the slumbering moral sense of a great people. "Let us," is his characteristic call to his fellow-worker, Mr. Stephen, "let us praise God for it."[46]

[46] Letter to James Stephen Esq.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JULY 1817 TO OCTOBER 1818.

Recess—Charity—Letters—Temper of mind—Pocket-book—Graffham—Stansted—Haytian correspondence—and Professors—Bishop Jebb—Death of Princess Charlotte—Letter to Regent and Prince Leopold—Christmas employments—Distressed sailors—West Indian—Mrs. Fry and Newgate—Secret Committee—Employment of spies—General Boyd—National Schools—Dissolution of parliament—Goes into the country—Liverpool—Casterton—Rokeby—Rydale—Muncaster—Keswick—Southey.

THE first few weeks of the recess were spent by Mr. Wilberforce in clearing off the unavoidable accumulations of the session. They were busy and fatiguing days, and exposed to continual interruptions from the calls of charity, against which his doors were never closed. "July 21st. The birth-day of my two eldest children. I regretted that I was so hurried; I had little time to give to them, or to prayer for them. A poor woman called immediately after breakfast, just when I had meant to spend a quiet hour in devotion; but I called to mind Christ's example, and looked up to Him, hoping that I should please Him more by

giving up my own plan and pursuing His—writing for her." [1] Such applications formed a large share of his common occupations; for he was not contented with the easy service of a trifling contribution to their present wants, but inquired either directly, or by his almoners, into the particulars of almost every case. "You were so good as to say," he thus writes, "that you would examine whether B. was in such circumstances as to afford fair ground for believing that £100 would, as he declares, extricate him from difficulty, and prove permanently useful to him. I own the earnestness of Mrs. B. makes me fear that their affairs are in a bad state, but you commercial gentlemen of experience can tell whether a man's affairs have a hectic flush or a pale wasting, or finally, the facies hippocratia with every prospect of a speedy dissolution. Mrs. B.'s father was a trusty, honest, and though a Roman Catholic, a religious man; and having been a faithful servant of my uncle, I think it quite a duty to attend to the state of his progeny; three or four of whom have been continually applying to me."

He was also writing to the Emperor of Russia, urging him to take such steps in the approaching Congress as should secure the execution of the Abolition compact. Of the reception of this letter he received from its bearer, the Rev. Lewis Way, a beautiful and characteristic sketch. "Non erat privati cujusdam cum imperatore, sed Christiani cum Christiano amicissima collatio. Mores humanissimi;

[1] Diary.

vultus arridens, cor apertum; loquela ardens; amor pœne vel potius penitus divinus: talia, teste Spiritu, memorabilem hanc interlocutionem obsignaverunt."

To these employments was soon added a kind and constant attendance on the death-bed of a near connexion. Here he may be followed in a letter to his friend Macaulay.

"Kensington Gore, July 29, 1817.

"My dear Macaulay,

When I first stretched out my hand for this *sheetling*, I drew it back again in order to replace it with a larger; but in stepped judgment or rather principle, which by the way came forward from behind your image in my mind's eye, as if they had been your constant companions, and forced me to resume my sheetling, suggesting to me (here shot in a glance at first severe, but instantly sweetening into kindness from the eye of an ideal James Stephen also) how many unanswered letters I have by me, how many unread papers, unkept appointments, unfinished businesses, &c. &c. Q. E. D. To answer your questions. We have not yet settled the ubi, only the quomodo. We shall spend D. V. the vacation of most of my absent children partly at the houses of two or three friends, partly by the sea, and we shall settle at Kensington Gore in the autumn.

"I must think seriously of a publication or two, and as I now work very slowly both from bodily and mental hinderances, I must not lose much time in beginning. The Hayti Bills are all at Smith's.

I have not seen Stephen for near a week, having returned only last night from Taplow, where Mrs. Wilberforce's mother and sister are staying at Mr. Neale's. They were to have come on to us, but when they arrived at Taplow, her sister was found to have a dangerous cough, and she soon burst a blood-vessel, and is now lying in a state enviable for the calm and heavenly tranquillity of her mind, but the vile body gradually decaying, and never likely again to rise from the bed on which it now reclines. How striking it is to see a tender-spirited young woman looking the last great enemy in the face, with as much calm resolution as was ever shown by any military hero in the field—with far more, indeed; for far more surely is required where all around tends to soften the mind, and give reason its full unruffled exercise, than when the drums, and trumpets, and artillery, and the bustle of war has excited all the passions. She has long been her mother's consolation and earthly support; but these services can be rendered by other friends, or even by confidential dependants. There are still higher services which so much-loved an object can alone render; weaning from this world and exercising faith, and patience, and child-like confidence and love. The effects of these will endure for ever; and the day will, I doubt not, arrive, when the mother shall see that her daughter was selected as the honoured instrument, after being her best and most assiduous friend in this world, of obtaining for her these still more excellent blessings. O my dear friend, the day is coming when it will be delightful to follow out all these now mysterious lines of Providence from the dark cloud in which they

are at first wrapped, into the full brightness of celestial glory. This thought was brought powerfully to my mind this morning, when observing that a passion flower was about to open we stopped for about five minutes, and beheld the complete developement of the beauties and symmetry of the interior.

"I hope you are approximating to the centre again, though trusting your excursion extra flammantia mœnia &c. would be serviceable to you, I quite rejoiced in your aphelion, and only regretted that you were forced to return homewards without completing your Highland peregrinations. Let me have a line to mention your probable time of return; it might enable me to spend a quiet day or two with you, which I should greatly relish, and I hope turn to profit. It has occurred to me on reflection that we have not been duly mindful of the importance of improving the female character in Hayti. I mean to press strongly on Christophe that the female sex is undervalued and ill-treated in all uncivilized countries; that they are the formers of the rising generation, and should therefore be fitted for their high office. Do be turning your mind to the best modes of improving Hayti, and the Haytians. It is a most important subject. I should have mentioned to you sooner a Dr. Walker of Edinburgh, whom I believe I have cribbed from being surgeon at Sierra Leone to be one of the Haytian professors. I desired him to find you out in Edinburgh and confer with you. Find out all you can about him, and pump out of him all you are able, and also pour in all you can get admitted.

"I quite envy—no, that is not true—I enjoy with you

in idea your visit at the Temple. It would—and I trust I may justly use the indicative for the optative, and say that some day or other it will gladden my heart again to revisit those haunts of my younger years. May God bless you and yours, my dear friend. What a blessing is friendship! How true is the psalmist's exclamation, 'How good it is to dwell together in unity!' It is in short a heaven upon earth. May we realize it here, from its being the reflection from the better and less imperfect state of it beyond the mountains. Kindest remembrances to all common friends, and believe me ever,

Your affectionate and sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

This was now become the ordinary temper of his mind. The morning clouds had passed away, and he walked in the fullest sunshine of "peace and joy in believing." His earlier Journals contain, as has been seen, records of hard struggles with "divers temptations;" but the power of the enemy had been long since rebuked; and after the most close and jealous self-examination he could humbly say, "I prefer spiritual to carnal pleasures, and never suffer any thing sensual to get the advantage over me deliberately. Am I guarded enough on the sudden?" He was still ever praying to be more fully "quickened, warmed, and purified;" and at times he complained "from what cause soever it is, my heart is invincibly dull. I have again and again gone to prayer, read, meditated, yet all in vain. Oh, how little can we do any thing

without the quickening grace of God! I will go again to prayer and meditation. Blessed be God, His promises do not vary with our stupid insensibility to them. Surely God has always blessed me in all things, both great and small, in a degree almost unequalled, and never suffered me materially to fail when there has been an occasion for exertion."[2]

But though occasionally harassed by such "dulness of heart," his ordinary spirit was far different. The full spring of love, and joy, and thankfulness was bursting forth into spontaneous expression in his conversation, his letters, and his Journal. All the natural objects round him had become the symbols of the presence and love of his heavenly Father, and like the opening of the passion-flower, suggested to him some new motives for thankfulness and praise. "I was walking with him in his verandah," says a friend, "the year before, watching for the opening of a night-blowing cereus. As we stood by in eager expectation, it suddenly burst wide open before us. 'It reminds me,' said he, as we admired its beauty, 'of the dispensations of Divine Providence first breaking on the glorified eye, when they shall fully unfold to the view, and appear as beautiful as they are complete.'" "For myself," says one of his letters, (Aug. 28th,) when to his own family he unveiled his heart, "I can truly say, that scarcely any thing has at times given me more pleasure than the consciousness of living as it were in an atmosphere of love; and heaven itself has appeared delightful in that very

[2] Journal, Feb. 11, 1816.

character of being a place, in which not only every one would love his brethren, but in which every one would be assured that his brother loved *him*, and thus that all was mutual kindness and harmony, without one discordant jarring; all sweetness without the slightest acescency."

There was no obtrusive display of such emotions. True Christian joy is for the most part a secret as well as a severe thing.[3] The full depth of his feelings was hidden even from his own family. "I am never affected to tears," he says more than once, "except when I am alone."[4] A stranger might have noticed little else than that he was more uniformly cheerful than most men of his time of life. Closer observation showed a vein of Christian feeling mingling with and purifying the natural flow of a most happy temper; whilst those who lived most continually with him, could trace distinctly in his tempered sorrows, and sustained and almost child-like gladness of heart, the continual presence of that "peace which the world can neither give nor take away." The pages of his later Journal are full of bursts of joy and thankfulness; and with his children, and his chosen friends, his full heart welled out ever in the same blessed strains; he seemed too happy not to express his happiness; his "song was ever of the loving-kindness of the Lord." An occasional meeting at this time with some who had entered life with him, and were now drawing wearily to its close with spirits jaded and tempers worn in the service of pleasure or ambition, brought

[3] Res severa est verum gaudium. [4] Journal.

out strongly the proof of his better "choice." "This session," he says, "I met again Lord ——, whom I had known when we were both young, but of whom I had lost sight for many years. He was just again returned to parliament, and we were locked up together in a committee room during a division. I saw that he felt awkward about speaking to me, and went therefore up to him. 'You and I, my Lord, were pretty well acquainted formerly.' 'Ah, Mr. Wilberforce,' he said cordially; and then added with a deep sigh, 'you and I are a great many years older now.' 'Yes, we are, and for my part I can truly say that I do not regret it.' 'Don't you,' he said, with an eager and almost incredulous voice, and a look of wondering dejection, which I never can forget."[5] "You must allow that Mr. Wilberforce is cheerful," said some of his friends to one who had just spent a week in the same house with him, and who was fixing on religion the old charge of dulness. "Yes," she said in a tone intended to convey reproach, "and no wonder: I should be always cheerful too, if I could make myself as sure as he does that I was going to heaven."

Yet with all this constant cheerfulness there was a marvellous sobriety in his religion. His secret records of humiliation are aimed at specific faults, and do not waste themselves in generalities. "How sad," he says on one of these occasions, "that I am still molested by the love of human estimation; so that when a man whom I think of very mean intel-

[5] Con. Mem.

lect spoke disparagingly of me before others I felt vexed. What weakness! and all the time abhorring myself for it too; what a strange thing is the heart of man!" Again, "I love human estimation too well, though I trust I strive against it; and I have no temptation to seek dishonourable gain. Now how ready am I to condemn those who addict themselves to the latter! Yet am not I as criminal in loving the former, for it is the not loving God that is the vice? O Lord, purify me, and make me meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."[6] Again he complains, "What over-valuation of human estimation do I find within me! And then also what self-complacent risings of mind will force themselves upwards, though against my judgment, which at the very moment condemns them, and yet my heart then claims credit for this condemnation! Oh the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart!"[7]

The same sober judgment watched over his hours of unusual religious joy. "Let me put down," he says this month,[8] "that I have had of late a greater degree of religious feeling than usual. Is it an omen, as has once or twice shot across my imagination—a hint that my time for being called away draws nigh? Surely were it not for my dearest wife I could not regret it, humbly hoping, deeply unworthy as I am, that there is a propitiation for our sins, and that the mercies of God through Christ would not fail me. But oh let me check the emotions of indolence and

[6] Journal, March 15, 1812.
[7] Ib. July 7, 1816.
[8] Journal, Aug. 4.

of trying to have done with the turmoil of this vain world of perturbations, and give way to a more lively gratitude for the mercies of the Saviour, and a more active determination and consequent course of holy obedience and usefulness. Alas, alas, considering my opportunities, I have been a sadly unprofitable servant. Pardon me, O Lord; quicken, soften, warm, invigorate me, and enable me to rise from my torpor, and to imitate the example of holy Paul, doing this one thing, forgetting the things behind, and pressing forward towards the mark of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Alas, I fear I sadly neglect my duties to my children, and also to the poor, for though I serve the latter more abundantly than by individual visitation, when with the motive of Christ's speech, (Matt. xxv. 40,) I attend to whole classes and masses of them, yet individual visitation has its good also. O Lord, teach, guide, quicken me. Without Thee I can do nothing; with Thee all things. Lord, help, bless, and keep me. Amen."

It is well worth the inquiry by what system of self-treatment these happy fruits had been matured. They were not merely the results of a naturally cheerful temper leavened with religious feeling; they resulted from close and systematic discipline. He kept a most strict watch over his heart. He still recorded by a set of secret marks the results of frequent and close self-examination under a number of specific heads. He used every help he could devise for keeping always on his soul a sense of the nearness and the goodness of his God. "I used to have an expedient

similar to the Jewish philacteries, (Numb. xv. 38, 39,) in order to keep up the sense of God's presence. Let me try it again. I must have Him for my portion and the strength of my heart, or I should be miserable here as well as hereafter." Another custom from which he "found great benefit was putting down motives for humiliation, motives for thankfulness, and so on, which" he "carried about with" him, "and could look at during any moment of leisure." Such a paper, copied in part from one of earlier date, appears in a pocket-book of this year.

HUMILIATION, MEANS OF, AND TOPICS FOR [9]

"Consider—all my motives and just causes for gratitude; constant, fervent, self-denying gratitude; and then with this contrast my actual state—all my means and motives also to improvement and greater advance in the Christian character. That if all that really passes within were visible, all the workings of evil positive and negative, (especially if compared with my principles and lessons to others,) all my selfishness of feeling, and coldness of affection, too often towards those even whom I love and ought to love most, all my want of self-denial, all my self-indulgence, what shame would cover me! Yet that comparatively I care not for its being known to God. And is this because of His and Christ's mercy? Oh what baseness! My incurable, at least uncured, love of human approbation, and my self-complacency or pain when much granted or withheld, even when my judgment

[9] Pocket-book, p. 56.

makes me abhor myself for it. (I trust I can say I do not allow this vicious feeling, but repress it with indignation and shame.) Oh were all that passes within in this instance to be seen fully, what shame should I feel! Realize this.—Look at various other Christians who have not enjoyed half my advantages or motives to growth in grace, yet how immeasurably they exceed me!" (Here many individuals are mentioned.)

"How little good have I done compared with what I might have done! What procrastination! Consider in detail how deficient in the duties of an M. P. father, master, friend, companion, brother. Resolutions broken. Intemperance often. How sinful this when taken in relation to motives to self-denial, from love to Christ—and to self-extinction, for me a vile ungrateful sinner! Oh shame, shame!

"Early advantages abused, and benefits often lost. —What an (almost) hell of bad passions (despair absent) in my soul when a youth, from emulation, envy, hatred, jealousy, selfishness! (Yet, alas! justice to myself requires my adding how ill-treated here.) Time, talents, substance, &c. wasted, and shocking goings-on (Christianity considered): and after the revellings over, as egregious waste of faculties and means among the fellows; card-playing, &c. Consequent course of living almost without God in the world, till God's good providence checked and turned me, (oh miracle of mercy!) in 1785, through the Dean's instrumentality.

"But, alas! since I professed and tried to live to

God, sometimes only preserved from gross sin and shame by preventing grace. And, alas! even till now how little progress, how little of the Divine nature, how little spirituality either in heart or life, how little of a due adorning of the doctrine of God my Saviour! How much vanity and undue solicitude about human estimation! (Oh if transparent here!) Procrastination, inefficiency, self-indulgence, living below principles and rules. Contrast all this with my almost unequalled mercies and blessings. And remember God and Christ foreknew all thy ingratitude. N. B. All thy sins, great and small, are open to God's eye as at first, entire, and fresh, and unfaded, except as blotted out by Christ's blood.

"I find it one of the best means of gaining self-abhorrence, after such reflection as above delineated, to consider and press home what I should think and feel about another favoured in all respects as myself, who should be such in all particulars as I am in point of sins, negligences, weaknesses, neglect and misuse of talents, &c.; and then contrast my sins with my mercies, my service with my motives, my obligations with my coldness, the gratitude due with the evil returned. Alas! alas! God be merciful to me a sinner.

GRATITUDE, MOTIVES TO.

"Born in the eighteenth century, and in England, when the increased wealth and civilization have enabled me to enjoy so many accommodations necessary to my usefulness, much more to my comfort.

"(N. B. Meditate under each head of its opposites,

as first, not in Africa, or Hindostan, or China, or even in Italy, or France. And second, not when Britain sunk in barbarism and ignorance, or even when few of the conveniences by which bodily distinctions so greatly annulled, and mind elevated over body. Had I been born in any but civilized times, I could not have lived; much less have lived in comfort and action.)

"Born an Englishman; that I was born of parents religious according to the old school; and that I was made such as I am, both in body, mind, and circumstances.

"Blessed with acceptance, early and continued, both in public and private life. Raised to so very honourable a station as M. P. for Yorkshire, and enabled to retain it near thirty years, (elected five times, and no prospect of opposition when voluntarily resigned it,) though from considerations weighed in God's sight I neglected all the usual attentions to the county both generally and individually.

"Providentially directed to such a pursuit as Abolition, and blessed by success.

"So many friends, and these so good in themselves, and so kind to me. Scarcely any one so richly provided with kind friends. This is a cause for continual gratitude.

"My domestic blessings. How few who marry so late in life have such affectionate wives! My children all kind and loving to me.

"Above all, my spiritual blessings; having been called, I humbly trust, and drawn by the Holy Spirit,

and enlightened, and softened, and in some degree sanctified. It is, I trust, my fixed resolution to desire to please God in all things, and to devote all I have and am to his glory, through Christ and by the Holy Spirit; yet, alas, how little have I of late been living a life of communion with God, in faith, and hope, and love, and joy, and usefulness! God be merciful to me a sinner.

"More especially, the astonishing mercy, and long-suffering, and patience, and loving-kindness of my God and Saviour: foreseeing all my unworthy returns, and yet merciful and gracious to me.

"The preventing grace of God in some notable instances, in which I was preserved from sin and shame by his unmerited goodness.

"So peculiarly favoured by exemptions from failure, or with acceptance and success; never have I been suffered to fail egregiously on public occasions, and when once or twice brought into temporary ridicule, how soon over!"

The friend, whose death-bed he was now cheering, "reading and praying with her daily," was upheld to the last by the same consolations. When her eyes had been closed in peace, he took his family to spend their summer holidays at Stansted, which had been kindly lent to him by his friend Lewis Way. On the road he halted a few days at the parsonage of Graffham, whence he wrote to Mr. Stephen.

"Graffham, Sept. 17.

"My dear Stephen,

I never was at a place where my time was so little at my own command. Dear Mr. Sargent has much to show me in this beautiful country, and I am therefore forced out in spite of my remonstrances, and driven in a delightful little open carriage, which to any one who like me cannot bear much exercise and feels but languid, is the very acme of luxury. Then we have some of his good neighbours to dine with us, so that the evening also is expended. But we go to Stansted to-morrow, and there I must set to work in earnest. I hope, my dear Stephen, we shall see you there. It has been giving me regret that I did not think of extorting from you the promise of a visit. How you would rejoice in ventilating on the hill under which I am now writing; and when at Stansted you are but twelve miles to a horseman or good footman from this place. You would be delighted to see the Sargents with seven children, most of them as fair as the light around them. How I wish you were here! Indeed, remembering how much my dear sister loved Mrs. Sargent, I am powerfully impressed with the feeling of the pleasure she would have had in witnessing such a scene of virtuous domestic comfort and rural beauty. But she perhaps does witness our enjoyments and partake of them, though with that complacent pity with which we look down upon the joys of children. May God bless you, my dear Stephen. You must take care of your health. I be-

lieve the pure air of these downs would be most salutary for you. Farewell.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He spent a month at Stansted, "making an excursion for twenty-four hours to Huskisson's country house, where I was most kindly received." "This is an entertaining and healthy holiday-place for the children." He delighted in receiving almost as much as giving such proofs of friendship; and with playful philosophy threw aside any of the little troubles it entailed. "Mr. Smith, the steward," are his Stansted Park reflections, "was all that could be desired —extremely obliging; in short, just representing his master. He, dear kind man, had endeavoured in every way to render me comfortable, had left me wine, and even china, plates, &c.; and the key of all his libraries, even of the sanctum sanctorum. We of course tried to do as little harm as possible. Though at first I thought we must have gone away on account of the housekeeper's bad temper, which sadly effervesced."[10] The same happy spirit breaks out in some humorous touches in a letter of this date.

TO JAMES STEPHEN ESQ.

"Stansted Park, Sept. 22, 1817.

"My dear Stephen,

I have just left Sir George and Miss Grey, who kindly came over this morning to breakfast with

[10] Diary, Oct.

us. If ever any man seemed made to obtain the willing subjection which a certain fine-looking Earl is disposed to command, it surely is Sir George Grey. I really could scarce refuse him any thing, so irresistibly powerful is the effect of his artless, generous, friendly frankness.

"One word about your coming here. I do not contest the superior claims of Milner, but I declare it is my real opinion, that spending three or four days in this dry air, roaming about the woods, &c. would do more good to your health than any other possible regimen. I must bar the probable objection that we see so much of you at home. I have sometimes thought that I should have quite a different idea of you, nay, I will frankly add, quite a different value for you, if I had not conversed with you by pen and ink when you have been at leisure, and have let me into your lucubrations. When we meet in or near London we always have points to discuss, &c. so that we are never able to enjoy a friendly tête-à-tête expatiation on moral or any other subjects. On this ground I would rather spend a day with you at such a place as this than a month in the body or even disk of London, the sun of the system—a sadly spotted sun methinks. Here we could have a long walk together, and have time to ruminate and to discuss. But I will say no more. It is very doubtful however how long or rather how short a time we stay here; for as poor Matthew used to say to Milner, 'There always are disagreeabilities you know, Mr. Dean.' As for our kind host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Way, (if being

absent they can be called such,) nothing can possibly be kinder; he has given me the key of a little sanctum sanctorum, which he values beyond all arithmetical estimate, and where none of the servants, or even of the family, are permitted to enter but when he is present. He left me a case of port, and an order for half a buck; but you would really be amused as much as by any part of Smollett or Fielding to witness an interview between the housekeeper, for I put her first, and Mrs. W. You know the Indians have a way of setting oddly contrasted animals to fight with each other, and I really long to set our old coachman and this fine lady in single combat. But I am forgetting how much I have to do—no, I must do justice to myself and assure you I do not forget it, or fail to consider it most seriously. May it please God to enable me to employ the small stock, whatever it may be, of talent and time that are left to me, more diligently and effectually than I have done hitherto; for alas, alas! . . . Pray for me, my dear friend, as I do and will for you. God bless you a thousand times.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Another letter will explain the immediate cause of the train of thought with which the last concludes.

TO THOMAS BABINGTON ESQ. M. P.

"Stansted Park, Oct. 4, 1817.

"My dear Babington,

You would, I fear, think me exaggerating, if I were to state, as strongly as I have really felt it,

my vexation at not having been able to write to you. Even to you I fear my long silence may have appeared unkind; indeed I have been neglecting not you only, but the greater part of my correspondents. Yet I have been daily blamed by my kind friends about me for keeping so close to my desk, and not taking more air and exercise. In truth this house is not the right place for a man who has so large an acquaintance as myself. You and Mrs. Babington can enter into my situation better than most people, being apt like myself to have the number of your inmates augmented in proportion to the size of your house. I have been very busy on Hayti letters all this week. All my six children are at home. The Greys from Portsmouth, all the Sargents; then people coming down from London for interviews, &c. &c. Alas! alas! 'Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness!' Well, if God be with us, whether in the bustle or the solitude—if we are engaged in the work He has assigned to us, and are performing it in the proper spirit, all is well. But it is now late on Saturday night, and I must say, farewell. Give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. Babington, &c. and believe me,

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Haytian business was what now so much engrossed him. His first consent to enter into correspondence with Christophe led to an assurance, "that they would take any thing from him," and Christophe (by whom he had been entreated to sit for his picture, a request made the year before by Blucher) sent him

in return the only portraits of himself and of his son which he had allowed to be taken.[11] He was on his guard in opening this correspondence. On receiving from a friend a political communication, which it was proposed to him to send to Hayti, he replied, (Nov. 4th, 1815,) "The general doctrine whether individuals might hold correspondence with foreign governments, was much discussed, I remember, about the time of that notable, and certainly most unjustifiable, intercourse which Fox carried on with Russia for the purpose of counteracting the policy and measures of the ministry of his own country. The principle that each community acted through its own government, which was its proper and only legal representation, was held very high by Burke and others. If I did what you desire, I really know not how I could stand up in parliament, and defend myself against the charges which might be brought against us. I cannot therefore think it right, as I now see the matter, to put my hand to such a letter."

To avoid all misconstruction he "determined to show Lord Liverpool the Haytian letters. I think it best; he is a man of considerable religious principle, and surely the prospects dawning upon Hayti will prevent his yielding to the highly probable disposition of too many of the West Indians, to blast these opening buds of moral and social comfort and virtue."[12] This was no exaggerated estimate of the interest of the cause. "Were I five and twenty," Sir Joseph

[11] They are still in the possession of Mr. Wilberforce's family.

[12] Letter to James Stephen Esq.

Banks wrote to him asking for Haytian information, "as I was when I embarked with Captain Cook, I am very sure I should not lose a day in embarking for Hayti. To see a set of human beings emerging from slavery, and making most rapid strides towards the perfection of civilization, must I think be the most delightful of all food for contemplation."

Christophe was truly a great man. Born and educated as a slave, he had raised himself to absolute power, which he was most solicitous to use for the good of his countrymen. To educate his people, to substitute the English tongue for that of France, and the Reformed faith for that of Rome, were now his leading projects; and in them he sought for Mr. Wilberforce's aid and counsel. His letters every where abound in truly elevated plans. "He has requested me," Mr. Wilberforce tells Mr. Stephen, "to get for him seven schoolmasters, a tutor for his son, and seven different professors for a Royal College he desires to found. Amongst these are a classical professor, a medical, a surgical, a mathematical, and a pharmaceutical chemist." He entered warmly into Christophe's views. "Oh how I wish I was not too old, and you not too busy to go," he writes to Mr. Macaulay![13] "It would be a noble undertaking to be sowing in such a soil the seeds of Christian and moral improvement, and to be laying also the foundation of all kinds of social and domestic institutions, habits, and manners." "It produces quite a youthful glow through my whole frame," he writes to Mr.

[13] July 19, 1819.

Randolph in America, "to witness before I die in this and so many other instances, the streaks of religious and moral light illuminating the horizon, and though now but the dawning of the day, cheering us with the hopes of their meridian glories." It was with this end especially that he undertook this new charge. "Christophe is not himself I fear," he says, "governed by religious principles," but he was ready to admit, and ever to uphold religion. "I have succeeded," he tells Mr. Hey, "in finding a physician, but I still want a surgeon, and much more a divine. Oh what would I give for a clergyman who should be just such as I could approve!"

He wrote at once to Mr. Simeon, to bespeak his assistance in this search. "When you consider, that Providence has thrown in our way an opportunity such as has seldom been afforded, of sowing the seeds of civilization, and still more of Christian faith, in this hitherto benighted quarter of the world, where, when they have once taken root, they will gradually diffuse themselves throughout all the coloured inhabitants of the Western hemisphere; (the number of souls has been calculated at 3,000,000;) and when you call to mind also that the opportunity is afforded by the ascendancy and the dispositions of Christophe, (Henry I.) and that we know not how long this favourable state of things may continue, or how long I may live, on whose influence with him much depends; you will I am sure concur with me in thinking that the utmost diligence should be used in endeavouring to find one or two persons, properly disposed and

qualified for undertaking this important work. I should greatly like to send over some person to instruct the King's son in various branches of useful knowledge. Perhaps the same person who should be at the head of the system of religious instruction might undertake this office also. I have no doubt he would be handsomely treated in all particulars. A painter who lately went over, is to receive 5000 dollars per annum. I should prefer a man of sound sense and of some knowledge of the world, provided he were really a practical Christian, though not a man of showy talents, to any man of great religious zeal, who might be likely to push matters further than the state of the King's mind, or the circumstances and disposition of the population in general, would probably bear." [14]

"Would that I had an hour or two," he says to Archdeacon Wrangham,[15] "to write to you on that most interesting subject of Hayti. You know I doubt not enough of the case to prevent your being misled by the scandalous falsehoods, which are so shamefully propagated against King Henry's (Christophe's) character. Now give me the best advice which your experience (I mean experience in books much more than in life) and your reflection suggests, on the important question how best and soonest to enlighten and moralize a semi-civilized community. I will send for your perusal a private letter to me from Christophe, which will I think at once astonish and delight you. Not but that I greatly doubt whether he can write,

[14] To the Rev. Charles Simeon, March 3.
[15] To the Rev. Francis Wrangham, Oct. 4.

or even read; at least I am not clear of the latter. But he dictates such letters as show him to be no savage. Well, he has requested me to send him over seven schoolmasters to teach his subjects by the new method to read and write English, arithmetic, &c. Also to send him several professors, &c. Above all, though he must be prudent in his proceedings respecting religion, and all the religion now professed there is Roman Catholic, with which the females continue imbued, attending mass, &c.; yet he wishes them to become Protestants, in short English in every thing. I am just about to send him a fifth schoolmaster, and a number of the recent publications for both the literary and moral instruction of youth. One of the masters after three or four months' instruction, wrote word in April last, that the youth applied to their work with almost unexampled zeal, and that their progress was really greater than he had ever witnessed in the same time."

"If I have not been writing for the British public," he replies to Mr. Babington's inquiries after his occupation during the recess, "I have for the Haytian, if I may be allowed to use the same figure of speech as Christophe (I beg his pardon, King Henry) himself. Never have I worked harder than at my Haytian letters, and yet at last the ship went away without much she was to have carried. But we shall have another opportunity, D. V. in about a fortnight. Really the prospect opens upon me both in colouring, and in the size of the objects.

"I have an offer for Hayti to-day, from a naval officer

ten years a post captain though young, (owing to high connexions,) of warm piety, and ready to go in order to do good. I have desired that he will come and reside with me a few days: we can then discuss together, and take each other's dimensions."[16]

"We have been," he tells one of his sons, "harder at work than ever, and still we are in the state in which the sea is after a great storm—a heavy swell—by no means at rest in the haven. For till we hear the ship has actually sailed, 'more last words' are continually occurring. And I find this Haytian connexion will by no means be an encouragement to indolence. But I trust it will be an occasion for doing much good, and I really look up to God with renewed thankfulness; I say renewed, for His having by His good providence drawn me to the Abolition business has always appeared to me to call for the most lively gratitude. Individuals who are not in parliament seldom have an opportunity of doing good to considerable numbers. Even while I was writing the sentence I became conscious of the falsehood of the position; witness Mrs. Hannah More, and all those who labour with the pen. Witness Dr. Jenner, and Sir Humphrey Davy, and all the good clergymen, which last class however I meant to except from the remark. But what various and extensive occasions of benefitting their fellow-creatures are presented to members of parliament in this highly-favoured country! And what thanks do I owe to God, for having led me from any subordinate line of official business into

[16] To T. Babington Esq.

lines of service of extremely extensive usefulness, and less bitterly contentious, till Mr. Marryatt entered the field, than the walks of politics! In this Haytian instance, we are sowing the seeds of civilization and knowledge in a new society, which (may it please God) you may live to see exhibiting the new spectacle of a community of black men, of which the mass will be as well instructed as any nation upon earth. I will enclose you some returns of the state of the schools which I have just now received. Pray take care of them, and return them in three or four days, after showing them to any confidential friends; but I think it is better to keep Hayti in the back ground, till it is able to stand on its legs in a firmer attitude.

"My dearest boy, remember my counsel. If you come into parliament, let me earnestly entreat you not to expend yourself in speechifying on questions of grand political or rather I mean party contention; but while you take part in the public and general discussions that are of real moment, for this is what I have commonly done, choose out for yourself some specific object, some line of usefulness. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with your subject, and you will not only be listened to with attention, but you will, please God, do great good. This is the mode in which I have often advised young men to proceed, but they seldom would be wise enough to follow my counsel, and hence you hear of many of them making one or two good speeches, and then all is over. This is really a sad waste of the means of prodigious usefulness which Providence has put into their power."

With such views opening on him, it was not unnatural that he should say, "never hardly did I feel so much interested as in finding proper people for Christophe, especially a tutor for his son." This was no easy task. When he first began the work he had received no remittances from Hayti. He cared little for this, as far as it regarded his own risk . . "if I should be a few hundred pounds out of pocket, the money might not be ill spent . . but" he scarcely knew what to promise others. Soon however he was intrusted with a considerable sum, which "proved Christophe to be in earnest;" and he was able to offer liberal terms to the professors. Still it was difficult to find any except men of broken fortunes, who would emigrate to Hayti. "It has often struck me," Mr. Stephen says to him,[17] "that you and all who have thought on the subject without experience, have formed an inadequate conception of the sacrifice involved in a colonial residence. Rely on it that in general there are only two motives strong enough to keep any man or woman, without necessity, six months in the West Indies;—religious zeal, and auri sacra fames." At Hayti moreover all depended on Christophe's life and power. His demoralized and debased subjects must be coerced into morals and civilization; and his death, or a revolution, would risk the fortunes or the lives of these his stranger guests.

Patiently and perseveringly did Mr. Wilberforce struggle against all these difficulties, not only corresponding largely with all quarters from which he

[17] Sept. 18.

might gather the assistance he required, but receiving both at "Kensington and Stansted the different applicants, that they might stay with me a few days, and enable me the better to take their dimensions." With all his overflowing kindness he was a shrewd observer of men's characters, and where he trusted to himself seldom imposed upon. Scarcely ever did a complaint escape from him in all this disagreeable service; and once only does he tell Mr. Stephen, "S., whose weakness and vanity are doing all the harm they can, has positively haunted us of late." So closely did he labour at the small French writing of this long correspondence, that his eyesight was permanently injured.

He had now returned into the neighbourhood of London, after spending a few days at Wood Hall Park, that he might get more undisturbed time to complete his Haytian letters. "I have been excessively busy of late, and in the line of duty. But my devotional time has been too much broken in upon; and this must not be. Much harassed by applications for recommendations to Hayti, by people of whom I know nothing."[18] He went on the 25th of October "to Battersea Rise, where most kindly received—Mr. Jebb and his friend, and particeps conciliorum, Rev. Mr. Forster, his curate, there. Former confined to his bed. Much chat in the evening. 26th. Mr. Forster preached morning. Sat up too late, but the conversation really important. 29th. Morning as usual. Dinner, Lord Guilford, Mr. Morier, who all

[18] Diary.

night and breakfast next morning, and was very entertaining. Jebb down yesterday—Lord Guilford very entertaining. 30th. To Kensington Gore after breakfast." Nov. 4th. W. set off for college. Talked much to him to-day; telling him the chief events of my early life. I could not sleep quietly for anxiety; yet dear —— means to give me pleasure. I fear he will be overborne from not forbearing to expose himself to temptation. I told him often the main matter was to put the guard in the right place. 6th. Heard for certain, what before reported, that Princess Charlotte died about five hours after the birth of a very fine, but still-born boy. She bore her long sufferings admirably. About ten days before, she had remarked, 'Certainly I am the happiest woman in the world, I have not a wish ungratified—surely this is too much to last.' The loss most deeply felt; their life had been truly exemplary—charitable, unostentatious kindness to all the poor around Claremont." "I must say," is the postscript of a letter sent on this day to Mr. Babington, "alas! for Claremont; yet surely this is an event which reasoning on Scripture principles we may easily comprehend, both in the probable meaning of personal mercy, and national, as well as domestic, punishment."

"I thought," his Diary continues,[19] "in the night of writing a letter to the Prince Regent, hoping to find his heart accessible, and put down some notes for it: but this day scarcely spent so profitably as Sundays should be. Too little private prayer and communion

[19] Nov. 15.

with God aimed at. Oh remember thy high calling and the precious promises, 2 Cor. vi. at the end, and 1 John iii. 1, 2, of fellowship with the Father and Christ, and Psalms lxiii. lxxxiv. xxxvi. O sursum corda." "Sent off," he says soon after, "a suitable letter with my Practical View to Prince of Coburgh. May God prosper it;"—and the notice of a "kind answer in which he promises to read it," is followed by the prayer, "May God bless to him the perusal of it."

Christmas soon closed in upon him amongst his usual domestic and charitable occupations;..."watching over" his "children"—"setting them to work," more especially in the evening, "each having his book" —or "taking them to see some jugglers;"[20]... not forgetful to entertain strangers; "Rev. Mr. Faure with us—Dutch clergyman, who sent me lately my book on Christianity translated into Dutch—going to Cape of Good Hope as clergyman; his father lives at Stillenborch; I hope pious, and says many of the ministers are so in Holland, though much infidelity too;"... or actively employed in devising schemes for the relief of any suffering with which he had been made acquainted. "Dec. 24th. To Lord Sidmouth's about the poor sailors and others in distress. Lieutenant Gordon kindly offered to inquire for me and ascertain. 27th. Much talk with Lieutenant Gordon about the poor sailors, who are starving with cold and hunger: by his own visitation many of them prove to be not merely sailors of the royal navy, but

[20] Diary.

petty officers; one a black man, who such in the Shannon when she took the American frigate—wrote letters by him to the city aldermen, Macaulay, &c. Collected a small private meeting—and Stephen going to Croker—a hulk set up by the Admiralty for the poor fellows."[21] He "heard" soon after with delight of "the success of the poor sailors' relieving plan," from which small beginning sprung all those institutions which are now so frequent at our outports for the reception of these gallant, but too generally thriftless men.

But though thus zealous in every good work, the year closed upon him with many humiliating thoughts of his own unprofitable service and the goodness of his God. "I am much affected," he tells Mr. Stephen, "with Lord St. John's death, once the inmate of my house for months together. He, his elder brother, and Chaplin, (called κατ' ἐξοχην, strong Chaplin,) all gone, and I still on earth." "Having so little time," says the record of his most secret feelings,[22] "I must not write—my eyes too being indifferent, and this is always awkward when meditation brings tears into them, and which hurt them as much almost as any thing. But what, alas! could I put down but what too often before. I have been extremely engrossed by business, made late at night, and so my private devotions have been contracted. Let me guard against procrastination; strive to be punctual and diligent; to grow in grace, living closer to God. Let me strive, though my

[21] Diary. [22] Journal.

children are with me, to prepare for the meeting of parliament. Above all, let us live in Christ to God and all will be well. O God, I go to prayer. Pardon, bless, sanctify me, and make me meet for a better world. My health is clearly not so good as it was, but I hope I regret it only as indicating my being called away before my work is done. Alas, alas! how much more might I have done, if I had been duly diligent and self-denying! But let me work at the eleventh hour. Lord, work in and by me, Amen."[23] "Amidst all my weakness, I can look to God through Christ, with humble hope, and even peace and joy in believing. Lord, what I know not teach Thou me. Wherein I am lacking, supply me with all needful supplies of grace and strength. I cast myself on Thy precious promises, and claim Thy offered salvation."

The year 1818 was an important era in the West Indian struggle; for though no ameliorating measure was actually carried, the friends of Africa were led into new counsels, and assumed a new position. The opposition made to the Registration Act forced them to establish its necessity, by going into an examination of the actual state of the slave population; and these inquiries revealed at once such an amount of crime and cruelty, as proved that there was no cure for the evils of the system, short of its entire subversion. "Our grand object, and our universal language," says his private memoranda,[24] "was and is, to produce by Abolition a disposition to breed instead of

[23] Journal. [24] MS. Notes.

buying. This is the great vital principle which would work in every direction, and produce reform every where." This had been hitherto their only aim; but a fuller view of the secret iniquities of the colonial system, too surely convinced him that even this would not heal all its evils; and now therefore for the first time the word *emancipation* occurs amongst his secret counsels. Yet as another instance of the practical and cautious character of all his efforts, he thought not in emancipation of depriving the owners of West Indian properties of their present right to the labour of their slaves, but only of granting to the slave such civil rights, as should bring him under the protection of just and equal laws, and make him a member of the commonwealth instead of the chattel of an absent master.

The fine shadings of these altering views, and their various colours as they pass into each other, cannot be so well exhibited as by free extracts from the private Diary in which they are recorded at the moment, mingled with the intervening objects which filled up his time. The year opened with his receiving an account, "Jan. 7th, of the dreadful murder of a poor slave—buried without a coroner's inquest —but dug up, and found all mangled—yet brought in by the jury, Died by the visitation of God. Then —— tried to fasten the crime on his own driver, by the evidence of the poor slave to whom the deceased was chained. But matter came out which led to his own trial, and he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Yet the governor seems merely to have

sent word that a trial for murder, but that the jury only brought it in manslaughter. Alas! alas! I must not write for the sake of my eyes; but my mind becomes so much affected by the sad state of those poor injured wretches that it keeps me awake at night. Oh may God enable us to possess the nation with a due sense of their wrongs, and that we may be the instrument of redressing them. But, alas! I grow sadly incapable; may I yet be strengthened to render this service.

"17th. The two American deputies, from the Free Coloured Colonization Society, at Kensington Gore to accompany me to Gloucester House; the Duke behaved very civilly to them. Afterwards took them to Lord Bathurst, who very civil to them, and at the door introduced them to Lord Liverpool, whom we met, and who also was very civil to them. He appeared very self-complacent as if he knew he had done a welcome thing, as indeed he had, by giving Halifax living to Knight. 30th. To Stephen's to meet at dinner Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Samuel Romilly, William Smith, Brougham, and Macaulay--an Abolition consultation. We had much talk after dinner; they were for my moving for papers, I own I was more for a full inquiry into the state of the slaves, and for a radical improvement. In the morning I had conferred with Watson about getting witnesses. 31st. To Castlereagh's after breakfast; long talk about Spanish treaty. He truly enough intimating that we ought to do him justice in our treatment of it in the House; remarking, how apt people in this

country to be eager before, but to forget when the object is gained. Also impressed me with a danger of pressing for too entire a change, in short for slaves' emancipation, till Abolition by other powers secured —the French, Dutch, and American right of search. Much struck with his remarks and information.

"Feb. 3rd. Dinner at home—Mr. and Mrs. Buxton, Mr. S. Hoare, jun. Mrs. Fry, Miss Priscilla Gurney—very interesting talk indeed, and agreed to meet to-morrow at Newgate."

"4th. Breakfast—Lieutenant Gordon, who told us much, and showed the Sailors' Association to have done much good. Went with our party to meet Mrs. Fry at Newgate. The order she has produced is wonderful—a very interesting visit—much talk with the governor and chaplain—Mrs. Fry prayed in recitative—the place from its construction bad."

"6th. To Freemasons'—meeting for new churches. Archbishop of Canterbury in the chair—many of the bishops. The Duke of Northumberland moved the resolutions. I chosen Vice President with a multitude of high-churchmen, and great men—said a few words.

"9th. Secret Committee. House—Spanish treaty —better off than expected—only four opposed us. Mackintosh and Bennett supported very handsomely. Marryatt and Gordon also. M. and ——— opposed most invidiously, on the two grounds of the money, and helping Spain against her colonies.

"10th. Secret Committee. House on Lord A. Hamilton's motion about tampering with Scotch evi-

dence, but expected it would be late and perhaps a doubtful question, so staid away to save myself, (I ought to do it more frequently,) and do home business.

"11th. Secret Committee. House—Fazakerley's motion—spoke, and better than usual—avowed openly my abominating the employing of spies and informers altogether, on the grounds of religion and morality, and sound policy." "I am astonished," he said, "that honourable gentlemen do not see that these are crooked paths. Certainly the employment of such engines cannot be justified upon religious principles. All the ways of falsehood and deceit are hateful to the God of truth." "I forced some others to speak out, and I really hope I shall be able to become an instrument in beating out the system, and of doing thereby more service to my country than I almost ever yet effected. But though I spoke better than usual, what I said not being palatable to either party, I was less than usual encouraged. O let me learn more to look upward for my reward. Canning very clever, and sometimes quite admirable, but too artificial; Tierney terribly bitter, and Bennett very coarse, but very strong. Lord Milton forgot we were a Secret Committee. I came home near two with Canning; I found him remembering Lord Milton's support of him in the Portugal business, and therefore saying. though he would cope with his arguments, he would always treat him personally with respect. This quite pleasing; so grateful. But poor Canning sadly loose in his reasoning; I spoke to him more openly

as we came home. Poor fellow, he had neither father nor mother to train him up. He was brought up partly I believe with Sheridan. I always wondered he was so pure.

"13th. Mrs. Fry called early about a poor woman under sentence of death for forgery—of the set that so improved in externals. Our murderous laws prevent prosecutions, and often harden convicts' hearts. Mr. Wray called and told me of the insurrection in Berbice. Alas, this I fear will make against us; though it ought to have an opposite effect. Went to Committee—Lord Milton made a very handsome apology for his having mentioned what he did the other night.

"14th. Lieutenant Gordon at breakfast—generously offering to go out to the West Indies if he could thereby bring out the oppression and cruelty which is now veiled over. But Stephen says nothing could be brought to light. It is shocking that we now know of one of the most horrid murders ever perpetrated, and tried to be fastened on another; yet we cannot bring it out because we should ruin our informant. Secret Committee—then dined with Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, but could get no opportunity of talking to her—Lord Sidmouth, Lord and Lady Ellenborough, Melville, and others.

"17th. Up late from having been awake thinking of the slaves' wretched sufferings, and partly the two poor women about to be hanged for forgery this day. Alas, how bloody are our laws! Secret Committee, and House—Lord Folkstone's motion for referring

petitions to Committee. Spoke from being called up by Sir Francis Burdett.

"19th. Captain Arabin called about Sir Sydney Smith's affair. Then called Lord Grenville's about West Indian business, and with him to Lord Lansdown's, where Grenville, Babington, Macaulay, Harrison, Acland, Brougham, &c. After much consultation we agreed to Lord Grenville's motion, that we should get a committee to inquire what was done in consequence of the recommendation two years ago from ministers to enforce registration, and improve the religious and moral state of the slave population. Consulted together after the House, on the best course for us as to West Indian slaves; and Brougham repeated what Stephen had before truly said, that we are much better acquainted with the whole subject than Grenville. On reflection I am against proposing a general committee now, and rather for bringing forward various motions, in order to make the country aware of the real state of the slaves and free coloured people, and for contending for various principles, as independence, and non-plantership of governor, and even still more of judge. Also marriage, schools, overseer being incapacitated when cruel, &c.

"March 4th. Buxton's—Joseph Gurney and Lord Rocksavage, breakfast. Then callers. Letters, and a long one to Dr. Chalmers, justifying myself from the charge of some persons in Scotland, that I had been inconsistent in speaking against spies, and voting against Fazakerley's motion.[25] It went

[25] Vid. Correspondence, &c.

altogether on a false assumption. Poor —— dined with us; it is quite melancholy to see him. When young he was, I understand, cheerful and pleasant, but there was nothing solid; nothing of vested labour; and now all is flat and feeble.

"5th. House on Phillips's motion—spies' and informers' examination. Wished not to speak, and meant; but at last forced up, and went off, through God's goodness, better than expected. Never did I give a clearer vote; for never would there have been a more long, intricate, complicated, unprofitable inquiry. Tierney gave the last prick, which forced me to rise; though not at all ill-naturedly I am glad to say. Nor was I ill-natured I hope: thank God I did not feel so."

But though not ill-natured, his reply was strikingly effective. Mr. Tierney's language had seemed to others rough and overbearing, and they waited with some anxiety for his reply. "I am not at all affected," he said, "by the tone of easy confidence which has been assumed, because I am too well practised in debate not to know that gentlemen never talk in that manner till their cause is desperate." Then, after observing that the motion which he was called upon to support was even more objectionable than that which had preceded it, he turned the attack which had been made upon himself into an argument against the spirit of party. "I and my right hon. friend who spoke last are old soldiers in parliamentary warfare, and I certainly feel no anger at what he has said, because I know it is nothing more than it is expected

he should say as the leader of opposition. But to what a pitch has party virulence come in this House, when, unless a person is systematically opposed to government, it is maintained that he cannot form an honest opinion on what is presented to him in parliament!"

This was one of the many occasions which incidentally discovered the weight which uniform consistency had given his opinion. The friends of government charged opposition with having framed the measure to catch his vote; and Mr. Tierney in reply declared that there was no one in the House, who, when he came fairly out, could render such effectual service to the ministry. Mr. Perceval's supporters had before this charged him with doing government more harm than the most systematic oppositionist. At that time indeed he was member for Yorkshire; but in giving up that county he had since done what one of his friends then told him "no one else could afford to do," and yet retained his former influence. This was so evident as to strike even a casual observer. "When Mr. Wilberforce," remarked Count Pecchio, "passes through the crowd on the day of the opening of parliament, every one contemplates this little old man, worn with age, and his head sunk upon his shoulders, as a sacred relic; as the Washington of humanity." Yet powerful as he was in the House, Mr. Southey was not wrong in thinking his "parliamentary interest by no means commensurate with the weight with which his opinion came to the public;—that being far greater than of any other individual."[26]

[26] Letter of R. Southey Esq. Dec. 11, 1817.

"7th. Rather wasted time with dear Bishop of Gloucester, who called and consulted about his answer to Whitehead's charge. Then wrote to Chalmers, explaining about the Spies motion—that I declared I would support proposition to prosecute. To Speaker's levee. Home with Canning—we agreed that for the raw material of a Speaker, the finest elements were in Lamb.

"8th. Sunday. Lay awake several hours in the night, and very languid this morning. My mind is very uneasy, and greatly distracted about the course to be pursued in the West Indian matters. It is hard to decide, especially where so many counsellors. This is clear, that in the Scriptures no national crime is condemned so frequently, and few so strongly, as oppression and cruelty, and the not using our best endeavours to deliver our fellow-creatures from them. Jer. vi. 6, 'This is a city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her.' Ezek. xvi. 49, of Sodom's crimes: 'Neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and needy.' Zeph. iii. 1; Amos iv. 1, 8, &c.

"I must therefore set to work, and, O Lord, direct, and support, and bless me. If it please Thee not to let me be the instrument of good to these poor degraded people, may I still be found working, like dear Stephen, with vigour and simple obedience, remembering, 'It is well for thee that it was in thy heart.'

"11th. Sadly distressed in mind about the proper course as to West Indian matters, but I believe it is wiser not to bring the subject forward just now, when the public mind, and too many of our friends, are

full of the Indemnity Bill. Many of the opposition are our friends. Presented General Boyd's petition."

"You can tell me," he writes to Mr. Grant, "how best, if at all, I can serve General Boyd, whose memorial I will enclose. Dr. Morse, of the United States, a warm friend of this country, and, I hope, a pious, active man, has recommended to me this General Boyd, and his fellow-traveller, Mr. Storer, a tutor of one of their colleges; and I wish, if I can, to show gratifying attentions to Dr. M.'s recommendation. I am clear, that we ought to endeavour by personal and individual civilities to Americans, to cultivate the good-will, and mitigate the prejudices and jealousy, of the people of that country. I trust true religion is increasing there."

"16th. House on various matters. I forced to divide as a mere joke, though some I find have misunderstood it into ill-usage. Slept at lodgings, and my sleep accidentally disturbed. How little a thing will molest me swagger as I may—a poor creature at best! Dear, good Vansittart's proposition for new churches.

"17th. General Boyd's Committee. House—where sadly late. Thought it right to attend the House when Vansittart moved the Report of his Church Bill.

"26th. Gloucester House to dinner—smaller party than usual—Lord Limerick, Lord Stuart, (I sat next to him, and talked a little seriously to him, for which the Duke thanked me afterwards,) Baron de Bode, Lord Shaftesbury, who told me the combined army's going upon Paris was in obedience to a letter from

the Regent, written without even advising with his ministers.

"28th. I still am in no little embarrassment what course to pursue as to the West Indian question. The denunciations not only against those who are guilty of the positive acts of oppression, but against those who connive at its continuance, are so strong that I am truly uneasy at my having suffered so much time to pass away without having done any thing for relaxing the yoke of the most degrading and bitter bondage that ever ground down the human species. Yet valid objections have always occurred against every specific plan. Oh may I be directed right! I quite long to bring some measure forward. Lord, guide and strengthen, and warm me with true Christian love of Thee, and desire to benefit my fellow-creatures for His sake. 31st. Much impressed by Mr. Buxton's book on our prisons, and the account of Newgate reform. What lessons are taught by Mrs. Fry's success! I am still warmed by the account. Were I young, I should instantly give notice of the business, if no one else did.

"April 1st. Mr. Storer and Everitt, Americans, breakfasted. Latter Greek professor in their Cambridge University—has been two years travelling—one year and a half at Gottingen University. He told me much of the scepticism of the professors, Eickhorn especially—Semler's opinions—sad work—long talk with him. The Morning Chronicle full of very middling wit, grounded on my adventure when forced to vote, and B.'s attack on

vital Christianity. Poor fellow, I wish he knew its benefit; surely his injustice is great in wishing the mob to believe me a friend of spies, when I was the first who condemned their use altogether, and by so doing compelled others to do the same.

" 13th. Gen. Boyd's Committee. House—which in a storm about additional allowance to Princes.

" 14th. After breakfast went to Stephen's to write letters and prepare for my motion. Eat a little cold meat in the carriage—was to bring on my motion for West Indian papers. But first I found the House in a whirlwind about the motion for increasing the incomes of the Princes, and when at last that was put off, I thought the members so full of that business which was to come on to-morrow that they would not give their minds at all to my subject. I shall avoid the risk of clashing with Sir Samuel Romilly who comes forward on Thursday, and the House will be wakened to the subject by his motion.

" 15th. Breakfast—Mr. W. Parnell the new M. P. for Wicklow (who by the way spoke the same afternoon, almost immediately on taking his seat). Mr. Daley and others—callers—hearing my dear boys their Scripture. Writing letters at Stephen's. House, on the grants to the Princes on their marriages. Voted against the Duke of Clarence's £10,000, and for £6000 per annum; which carried by 195 against 184. Did not speak, partly because I might have incurred the imputation of revenge.

" 16th. Expected Sir S. Romilly's Slave motion, but the Princes' grants discussion consumed the

whole evening. Voted for and carried—spoke also—the Duke of Cambridge's £6000 per annum. Duke of Clarence declined the settlement in civil terms.

"22nd. In Stephen's library for quiet, and preparing for discussion in the House on West Indian affairs. My motion for papers explaining about Registry Bill. Then Romilly's about Dominica cases of cruelty. I spoke long but not well—too much matter imperfectly explained, and without due method. But the mercenary feelings of some, and the prejudices of others, with the cry against me, make the reporters so inattentive to me that they do not affect to report what I say. May God only enable these poor injured creatures to find a deliverer: what men say of me is little—in some views it is even gratifying. I used to fear I was too popular, and I remember, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him,' &c. Only forgive me my own many defects, infirmities, and negligences.

"24th. I could not sleep last night for thinking of poor H. Skelton, with whom John Sargent had been yesterday in Newgate, and described her unutterable agony—to suffer this morning for forgery. To Education Committee, by Brougham's desire—then lodgings, where wrote and dined on cold meat. The Courier of yesterday contains a most bitter attack on me and others for our West Indian interference; I almost am glad of it. Surely God will assert his own cause; when the powers of darkness thus come forward and instigate their agents, He will overpower them. I have no fear, though my poor weak body, and

decayed faculties, may not enable me to see in this world the triumph.

" May 1st. Simeons staying in the house officiated at family prayer—devotional, but not sufficiently practical; stating warmly the privileges and enjoyments, and in a degree the character of Christians, but none of those urgent admonitions and warnings, which Scripture contain, nor those exhortations to penitence. When clear from people, to Freemasons' Hall. Meeting of the friends of National Schools called together to replenish the treasury—Duke of York in the chair—Archbishop of Canterbury, York, and Bishop of London, and ten or twelve more. Lord Harrowby moved the first resolution, which given me to second. All circumstances considered . . my having been canvassed by the Archbishop himself, my being suspected, though falsely, of loose attachment to the Church because I do not hate Dissenters . . I gave £50,—more than I could well afford,—and doubled my annual subscription; but we are not to suffer our good to be evil spoken of. Dear Acland did very well—Duke of York kindly obliging as always—talked with Marsh Bishop of Llandaff, and Luxmore of Hereford, about Cambridge regulations, lodgings, &c.

" 10th. Determined to come in again for Bramber, at least for two years, under some strange circumstances. Thus Providence seems to fashion my ways, and if I should go entirely out of public life in two years, I hope to have previously sown the seeds and laid the foundation of the West Indian reform. I shall then, if I live, be sixty, as much as most men's

seventy. But my times, O Lord, are in Thy hand. Oh how truly may I say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days! What cause have I to be thankful for kind friends! Lord Gambier most affectionate. Stephen most disinterested, and kind, and generous. Babington and Inglis, Charles Grant and Macaulay too, and Col. Barry truly friendly, frank, and kind. Surely no man ever had such undeserved mercies. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

"17th. Trinity Sunday. Blessed be God, I felt to-day more sensibly than of late the power of divine things. Was it the present reward of not yielding to the impulse which I felt, but upon good grounds, to be longer in bed? I remembered Christ's rising long before day, and got up. Babington sent me a kind letter, warning me of H.'s excessive and vindictive rage, and intention to charge me with duplicity (I am sure I can say in the presence of God, none was intended) about the Bill for permitting the removal of gangs of slaves from the Bahamas to Guiana. Lord, undertake for me; let me not bring discredit on Thy holy faith. Thou hast the hearts of all under Thy power, O turn them favourably towards me. At least let me not discredit Thy cause. I will not think on this business until to-morrow: but to-day I may say, 'Lord, be Thou my surety for good.' How many are the passages in the Psalms which give comfort under the assaults of unreasonable and violent men! How strongly have I felt the double man within me to-day! I really despise and abhor myself for the rising of thoughts referring to human esti-

mation; which nevertheless will rise even as to this very self-abhorrence, and so on ad infinitum. Oh what poor creatures we are! This should make us long for a purer heart and a better world.

"19th. Sir A. Johnstone about Madagascar boy, and Hayti. Then lodgings, where met General Boyd and Storer — Mr. Rush, American minister, as amicus curiæ. I hope he found he was wrong, more than he would before own, yet I cannot believe him dishonest.

"20th. General Boyd's Committee to receive his answer—a sad business. Then House on Romilly's motion.[27] I spoke but very indifferently—Marryatt however, and his principles, were deserted.

"26th. Mons. Pictet and grandson from Geneva breakfasted—he spirited, talked of plays and players — Siddons — theatre less profligate than formerly. With Mackintosh to Chancellor of Exchequer's about Sir Sydney Smith's affair, meaning to bring it before the House. Then Nevis Committee—went to business, examining Weekes—Romilly cannot attend.

"June 1st. I meant to slip away early to Stephen's room and finish the Report for Boyd's Committee, when in came poor old Arthur Young, and I could not turn him away. Then Sir J. Mackintosh — afterwards to Stephen's, and then to Boyd's Committee, where high compliments paid to the Report as a composition, but its justice denied. Sir R. F. and Lord B. especially violent against poor Boyd, and really unfair to him.

[27] On the treatment of slaves in the island of Nevis.

"2nd. At the Report. Then at twelve to Boyd's Committee—disagreeable contest again till four, when with Mackintosh to Lord Liverpool about Sir Sydney Smith; meaning to petition the House to-morrow if we can't get him relieved without. Eat cold meat, lodgings, and House. Heard Burdett on Parliamentary Reform—moving for universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and Cochrane seconding; with tears taking leave of the House. Then Brougham's excellent reply.

"10th. Kept at home by letters till time for the House. Spoke of French Slave Trade, and Lord Castlereagh promised fair. Indeed he has done all he could. The Regent came to the House, and, as I learned afterwards, not only prorogued, but dissolved the parliament—the first time since Charles the Second's reign. Tierney resented it. Went with Governor Farquhar, Sir Alexander Johnstone, and Duchess of Beaufort, to see Borough Road school: meaning afterwards to see the Baldwin's Garden central schools, but too late. Samuel Thornton resigns out of kindness to Sumner. Dear Babington retires from Leicester—we are all grieved beyond measure. Sad work, my old friends leaving me.

"12th. Auxiliary Bible meeting for Kensington, &c. I forced to take the chair—whole went off admirably—no stuff—Dr. Henderson interesting.

"16th. William Allen and Mr. Boocock (fresh from Africa) with a dreadful account of the French Slave Trade depredations. Allen's account of the comfort of Owen of Lanark's people delightful; but

not owing to his lessons; there are several good people there. Heard for an hour and a half out of doors Davison's. Essay on the Poor Laws. Very clever, and some masterly passages.

"July 4th. General Boyd this morning kept me above an hour. Perhaps I did wrong in thinking it possible a man of so little clearness of head could be made to take a fair view of his own case. I believe and hope he has a generous, honest heart; but surely never was there a stronger instance of the effects of listening to tattle than the accounts to which he gave credit; and when told that £10,000 was all we could get, he at once declared he should reckon such a sum an insult.

"7th. After breakfast with Duchess of Beaufort to National School; but too late, and all the children gone—so we staid till they returned at two, and chatted with them—but time lost—though I thought it right, if only as a compliment to the National Schools, to take the Duchess to them, having taken her to the British and Foreign. Duke de Rohan was to have met us but did not come."

He was now leaving the neighbourhood of London. "The quiet of this place," he says at Elmdon on the 17th of July, "is quite delightful after all our bustle. The colour of the ground is quite changed by yesterday's delightful rain."[28] His spirit expanded amidst rural sights and sounds, and his heart overflowed with thankfulness to the Giver of all his mercies. He longed to teach all around him his own song of grati-

[28] Diary.

tude, and could scarcely bear its absence. 'Most kindly received," he says after visiting an early friend, "by T., and he lives most comfortably, to the full of that word—I might say splendidly; but it is grievous and very injurious to spend day after day enjoying every indulgence without the mention or apparent thought of the Giver of all good, and the Object of all hopes. Oh if a fellow-creature had given us every thing, how should we have talked of him! What exuberant overflowings of gratitude should we have witnessed! It is a delightful place, and a magnificent house. But I find it hurt my own mind: I felt less from the non-recognition of Christ the latter days than the first and second. Oh that I might more and more walk by faith habitually!" "Alas, poor G., from spending all his time in hunting and farming, is grown empty and stupid."

He was now halting at Elmdon on his way towards the Lakes. "There are two places," he had said in earlier life, "to which, if I ever marry, I will take my wife—to Barley Wood, and Westmoreland." But Westmoreland he had never yet found time to visit since his marriage; and even now, the fresh arrival of some Hayti parcels made him "grieve in secret over this Lake expedition." Mr. Southey had endeavoured to engage for him a house at Keswick; and, though unsuccessful, enticed him onwards by letter. "I am very sorry that you are not in this delightful country during this delightful weather. We are enjoying a real honest, old-fashioned summer, such as summers were forty years ago, when I used to gather grapes

from my grandmother's chamber window—warm weather for polemical writing; and yet little as such writing is to my taste, I have been employed in it for the last week. B., with his usual indiscretion, thought fit to attack me from the hustings. It was wholly unprovoked, as I had taken no part whatever in the election, and every thing which he said of me was untrue. So I am giving him such a castigation as he never had before, and which it is to be hoped may last him for his life." Ten days later he writes again. "The heat of the summer is checked, and we are enjoying sun and showers, with just such a temperature as makes exercise pleasant, and allows one to enjoy a little fire at night. I am as true to the hearth as a cricket or a favourite spaniel, and reckon it a privation when the weather is too hot for enjoying this indulgence."

Some continuous extracts from his Diary during this excursion, will show the natural working of his mind in a time of relaxation. Leaving Elmdon on the 10th, he reached Seaforth House, near Liverpool, upon the 11th of August. "When we got upon the paved roads, our linch-pin twice came out, and our spring-straps broke. A kind Providence favoured us, that no accident. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

"12th. Morning and evening prayers. How gratifying that we have some Christian merchants! Most kind treatment. Staid at home for writing. Mr. J. remarkably pleasant—overflowing, and sparkling all the while. In the evening got into an argument about Dr. Johnson's religion. Mr. J. showed me after-

wards Dr. Johnson's affecting farewell to Windham.—'May you and I find some humble place in the better world, where we may be admitted as penitent sinners. Farewell. God bless you for Christ's sake, my dear Windham.'

"13th. To Liverpool in Mr. Gladstone's carriage, and saw the Botanical Garden—very fine. He and Mr. Koster kindly meeting us. Up late from having slept ill. * * * * * This sad circumstance poisons all my comfort, though I turn my mind from it."

No man more diligently practised this wise and healthy philosophy. "In the night," he tells a friend to whom his heart was open, "a certain subject is apt to get the better of me and keep me awake; not so much from direct distress as from its being so interesting that it occupies the mind, and the effort of thought which is required for turning to another subject wakes me." These wakeful nights were a great drain upon his strength, but careful self-discipline had taught him the true Christian alchemy which can extract from all outward things the elements of gratitude and praise. "I am up late," says his Journal, "from having a very sleepless night, though blessed be God a very comfortable one—no pain and even no anxiety; my mind meditating gratitude to God for all his mercies, and thinking over passages of the Psalms." It was a striking sight on such a morning to contrast his "hunted" and languid frame with the full burst of thankfulness and joy, which seemed to flow most freely when the weakness of the body

showed that it sprung from a spiritual and heavenly source. The prayer for Thursday in his forms of family devotion—taken down by a visitor on one such morning in this very autumn, affords perhaps the best example of this happy state of mind. But to return to the Diary.

"14th. Liverpool again, and saw the Athenæum, Town Hall, &c. Called on Roscoe, Mr. Horsfall, &c.

"15th. Got off at half-past eleven—travelled on shaking roads, and alarmed about the wheels firing—waiting for horses, so it was half-past eight when we reached Lancaster, and nearly dark. Just walked to castle and church, and saw the mountains at a distance. Mr. Joy kindly came to us. Reached Casterton at midnight—most kind reception.

"16th. William Wilson's sermon excellent, though too Calvinistic. Afternoon better, and his examining and talking to the children excellent.

"17th. Afternoon to Kirby Lonsdale Missionary meeting. I spoke miserably—half asleep—forced to it. Dear Bickersteth and Mr. Sibthorpe there.

"18th. Off at half-past eleven for Rokeby, and not in till half-past ten—four hours and a half each on two stages of eighteen or nineteen miles—horses wretched—most kindly received. Dr. Woollaston and Mr. Blake here. Morritt's family—nephew a fine young man, and two nieces sweet girls.

"19th. Long home walk—delightful banks of Greta—through stony bed." From this hospitable house he interrupts a business letter to his friend

James Stephen, with "How I wish you were here, not only that I might see you, but that you might see the sublime and beautiful scenery of this charming place! A highlander long absent from his native land, coming out of the south with a companion, broke out on arriving here, with 'Oh this I understand, this river Greta talks Scotch.'

"21st. Get little done. The weather cloudy but fair. Carriage, and walking by the river Greta—Brignal woods—grand views. Dr. Woollaston and Mr. Blake left us to-day for London. Woollaston talked more last night and this morning, and was very agreeable—looks forward to greater and greater discoveries, except perhaps in astronomy. Walter Scott and Mrs. and Miss, and Captain Ferguson came to dinner to stay some time—Scott very entertaining, full of stories which he tells excellently.

"22nd. Off at eleven, and at Casterton by eight. Henry Venn, Miss Elliott, and our two boys from Nuneham joined us.

"24th. Having only this day to spend at Casterton; and Mr. Wilson going off to Preston, I was forced to stay with him in the morning, and afterwards to walk with the rest; meaning to have another day for my birth-day keeping. Alas, what reflections force themselves on my mind!

"25th. Off about eleven, and to Kendal, and Rydale about half-past five, delighted with the place. Miss Wordsworth our kind provider already with us, and most kindly assiduous.

"30th. Morning at church at Grasmere—heard

Mr. ——, a southern; a sort of a Foundling Hospital sermon.

"Sept. 2nd. R. and S. off to see Keswick." They went longing to see Southey, but charged not to call upon him, "lest seeing lads of your age, should too painfully remind him of the son whom he has lost.

"5th. I took a two hours' walk by Rydale and Grasmere, and a good deal tired." It was not a little affecting to see him retracing with delight all his haunts of earlier days—another man in many things; his body bent and weakened, but his mind furnished and matured; his soul purer and well established after many struggles; but having passed through all the bustling scenes of an unquiet life with the simplicity of early tastes and affections unimpaired, pointing out to his children every well-remembered beauty, and teaching by them golden precepts and a most eloquent example the secret of his own calm and happy temper. "Why should not you buy a house here," one of his children asked him as they walked, "and then we could come here every year?" "I should enjoy it," was his answer, "as much as any one, my dear, but we must remember we are not sent into the world merely to admire prospects and enjoy scenery. We have nobler objects of pursuit. We are commanded to imitate Him, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It doubles my own enjoyment to see my dear children enjoy these scenes with me; and now and then when we need rest from severe labours, it may be permitted to us to luxuriate in such lovely spots, but it is to fit us for a return to duty; and we must bear in

mind too that at present we are in a world which is in a measure under the wrath of God, and there is much mercy in every natural beauty that is left in it. We may be contented to wait for full enjoyment till we get above to that blessed place, where the desire of our gracious God to bless us shall meet with no obstruction, and His love shall have no check upon its full exercise."

Yet he tasted thankfully of present pleasures. "I do not often," he tells Mr. Stephen, "get out of the garden for any vagarious wanderings, but whenever I do extend my walk, as to-day for instance, when I was seduced from pacing it upon the terrace with my reader at my side, and get among the rocks, and scale the mountains, I quite long to have you with me." "7th. Busy till one. Then on Winandermere. Dined in the boat, under the lea of the great island. Home late, a delightful evening. Yesterday evening charming. Walked out at night and saw the moon and a flood of light from Wordsworth's terrace. 20th. Fair at church-time, and I went to Grasmere, where —— read a common-place sermon at cantering or rather galloping pace; he preached last Sunday a sad trifling sermon on repairing Chester cathedral; and before that, one chiefly taken from Hall's on the Princess Charlotte, utterly unintelligible to the bulk of his hearers. He dined with us, and I was sorry to find he already knew Cooper's Practical Sermons. I hoped they would have approved themselves to him—but, alas! In the afternoon I walked to two or three cottages, and talked on religion to the people." His

fervent spirit could scarce be contained in the full sight of such a state of things. "Our population," Mr. Southey told him, "is in a deplorable state both as to law and gospel. The magistrates careless to the last degree; whilst the clergyman of —— has the comprehensive sin of omission to answer for. The next generation I trust will see fewer of these marrying and christening machines. The manners of the people have dreadfully worsened during his long sleep. Even within my remembrance there has been a great change."

During his short stay amongst the Lakes he did what he could to check this evil. He strove to rouse the slumbering energies of all whom he could reach or influence, and in all his scenery excursions visited the poor himself. "Went to see Langdale—went into a cottage and a dame's school: the resident in the former seemed dejected; had lost her husband in Appleby gaol, and nine children remained. The poor woman kept a little shop."[29] He was now meditating an excursion to Muncaster and Keswick. "I am almost as much a fixture," Southey wrote in answer to his inquiries, "as my great neighbour Skiddaw himself; so that whenever you visit Keswick you will be certain of finding me . . . We have had a longer continuance of fine weather in this country than any person can remember. Saturday was our first wet day . . . The clouds have risen this evening, and we have at this moment some of those beautiful appearances which a stranger would think well pur-

[29] Diary, Sept. 24.

chased by a wet day. I hope this is indicative of another change."

On the 28th of September he set off "by Broughton for Muncaster, over Stoneshead, very near dark. The ladies terrified about the water, but not fearing the descent of the hill. Through God's goodness we arrived without the smallest accident, though the ladies sadly terrified; and when a manifestly honest voice told us close to the river that there was perfectly safe passing for an hour to come, their feelings burst forth in tears. This natural, and a good issue of a critical danger. Most kindly received—Morritt there—his nephew Stanley, a gentlemanly young man, Mr. Stow, Lord Muncaster's executor, Lord and Lady Lindsay, and five children. Staid at Muncaster till Friday; strongly pressed to stay longer, but could not. Morritt very cheerful, unassuming, full of anecdote, and a good deal of knowledge—literary—of the old-fashioned Church of England religion, and high-spirited as to integrity, generosity, gratitude, friendly attachment, &c. Most kind to his family and friends. Never did I see such effects of light on the mountains, except perhaps on the Marine Alps from Nice, as here in the afternoon. The ladies went out daily in the carriage to some or other of the grand scenes. I commonly walked with Mr. Stow and Lord Lindsay, and wrote letters." One of these gives an interesting picture of the feelings which these old scenes rekindled in his mind.

TO SAMUEL SMITH ESQ. M. P. WOOD HALL PARK.

" Muncaster Castle, Cumberland, Oct. 1, 1818.

" My dear Friend,

I should be strongly urged to take up my pen to write to you, were it only to satisfy the feelings which are daily produced in me as I revisit the various scenes of this delightful country, over which you and I rambled two and forty years ago. What reason, my dear friend, have we both to consider as addressed to ourselves the injunction of Holy Scripture, ' Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years!' but there the parallel ceases, for the passage goes on, ' through the wilderness,' whereas both to you and to me (as you I doubt not are as ready to admit as I am) life has been any thing but a wilderness. In truth it has not been a country flowing with milk and honey only, but with every other benefit and enjoyment which the heart of man could wish for, and more than any would be presumptuous enough to request. You may conceive on reflection what interesting recollections are called forth in my breast, when I recall to mind the scenes we visited, the objects which then engaged our minds, the conversation which passed between us, (I am now within a very few miles of Wastdale Head, the valley in which we slept, or rather passed the night, in the same wooden crib after piercing through the Gorge of Borrodale,) and then when I proceed to review the long line of subsequent events, what do I see, but the continual bounty of the great Or-

dainer of all things? What reason have I to adopt the language of the psalmist, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!' I cannot but add, Oh that my gratitude were more commensurate with the vast and unceasing kindness and long-suffering (for long-suffering also I must add) of my unwearied Benefactor! But how I am running on! I have abundantly proved the truth of the remark with which I opened, that I was stimulated to write to you by my feelings alone. Farewell, my dear friend, and believe me,

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Another letter dated the same day is an instance of the various claims upon his thoughts which found him out at Muncaster as surely as in London.

"Muncaster Castle, Oct. 1, 1818.

"My dear Macaulay,

K——, a young man who was rakish and in distress, is now stopping in Madeira, on his way to the East Indies. He now professes to be penitent; praises Doddridge's Rise and Progress, &c. I hope all may be well, but dare not be too sanguine. Will you mention him, and forward the enclosed, to some pious man (Edwards I think is the name) resident in Madeira, who, if K. be really religiously impressed, may help to kindle the smoking flax.

I am ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"What emotions are called forth by my review of these well-known scenes! Do not you remember our meeting here?" "I wish you were by my side," he again tells Mr. Stephen, "that you might admire the magnificent mountains, that in a more than triple pile, are rearing their sublime points before me, and guarding as it were the peaceful vale which they terminate."

On the 2nd of October he "reached Keswick after dark by Ennerdale-head and Lowes-water, and got to very comfortable lodgings. I found afterwards that Mrs. I., our hostess, had been a pretty young woman, whom I remember forty-two years ago as Polly Keen of Hawkshead; now she is a toothless, nut-cracker-jawed old woman, but quite upright and active. 3rd. On the lake with poor Thomas Hutton, who now seventy-five or six, but still active. Too rough; and rain coming on, I walked from Lowdore and caught no cold, D. G.

"Sunday, 4th. Appearance of the clouds and vapours, half-concealing, half disclosing the mountains, most wonderful from the churchyard. The service coldly performed by the vicar, an easy, good-natured man, but I fear a poor creature. Keswick worse now as to morals than thirty years ago, and still more forty. So says Southey, who has lived there fifteen years; he is always at church. Wordsworth too at Grasmere, not so it is said formerly. Read prayers, &c. to my family in the afternoon. Spent the following week at Keswick—visited Southey, who very pleasing, light as a bird in body, and till the loss of his son, I hear his

flow of spirits astonishing. He is a man of extraordinary method and punctuality; hence booksellers love to have to do with him. His library excellent; filled with curious Spanish and Portuguese manuscript volumes. He allots one time (before breakfast) to poetry, another to history, and so on. His History of Brazil is that to which he looks for fame. He is kind, hospitable, generous, virtuous, and I hope, religious, but too hasty in his judgments, and too rash in politics. Hence he would be a dangerous counsellor though an able defender." [30]

"R. and S. got to Rydale on Thursday night, and are staying with the Wordsworths. I heard just before I went, that the daughters of a shopkeeper who had lately returned to Keswick with an acquired fortune had set up a Sunday school. I called on them and gave them £2 for it, and encouraged them. The vicar would not join though they are churchwomen. I was much inclined to stay till Monday in order to see after the school on Sunday, but could not send for the two boys to us. I tried to urge —— to religious efforts for the town, but could not prevail on him; he pleaded want of time, no co-operators, &c. I long to settle there and try to do some good, though I see the difficulties great. On the 22nd a Bible meeting is to be held, Richmond having written to the Dissenting minister—not well judged. It caused me much pain and self-reproach afterwards that I had not fixed to stay over Sunday. May God forgive me. O let us yield to the still small voice, and make doing religious good overbear at once all other considerations."

[30] Diary, Oct. 10.

Four days later, on the eve of his departure from the Lakes, this Keswick visit was returned. "Southey with us—much delighted with him." What Southey thought of him may be told in his own words. "I saw more of your father during his short residence in this country, than at any or all other times; and certainly I never saw any other man who seemed to enjoy such a perpetual serenity and sunshine of spirits. In conversing with him you felt assured that there was no guile in him; that if ever there was a good and happy man on earth, he was one; and that eminently blessed as he was with a benign and easy disposition, the crown of all his blessings was that inward and undisturbed peace which passeth all understanding.

"I recollect one circumstance during his visit to the Lakes, which shows the perfect reliance his servants had upon his good nature,—forbearance it might have been called in any other person, but in him it was no effort. The coachman came in to say that some provision concerning the horses had been neglected, and your father with a little start of surprise, replied, 'that indeed he had not thought of it.' 'No!' said the coachman, and 'since you have been in this country, you have all of you been so lake, and valley, and river, and mountain mad, that you have thought of nothing that you ought to have thought of."

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, BUNGAY.

Fac Simile of the handwriting of Mr Wilberforce

1

Novr 21st Monday. 1784. Began my journal with a View to make myself humble & watchful ——

Bacon says; Great Changes are easier than small ones —

Sunday 1787 Godalmighty has placed before me two great Objects the Suppression of the Slave Trade & the Reformation of manners.

Sunday 1/2 o'clock Feby 22^d 1807 Val Ipd never surely had I more cause for Gratitude than now at carrying the great Object of my life to which a gracious Providence directed my thoughts 26 or 27 years ago & blessed my Endeavours in 1787, or 88 & 89 and Let me praise Him w. my whole Heart.

Fac Simile of the handwriting of Mr Wilberforce

2

Jan 6th

My dear R

Assignments

W Wilberforce

We like this place extremely. The climate suits me & the boat boasts opportunities either of pushing or shelter and most delectable —

Right Hon. Wm Pitt

Lymes Sat. Jan. 14. 1804

Gratitude Motives to 1818
Born in England ~~&~~ in the 18th Century
When the increased Wealth & Civi-
-lization, has enabled the to enjoy
so many Occupations necessary to my
Usefulness, much more to my com-
-fort — Being an Englishman,
that, born of Parents, reg[d] according
to the Old School, & that I was made
both in Body, Mind, & Circum-
-stances ~~of~~ Blessed with Acceptance
early & continued, both in public
& private Life — Raised to so very
honourable a Station, as MP for
York, & enabled to retain it near


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